Assessment of stakeholder views on tourism management in a Venezuelan national park

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To Jovan, because you inspired me to get here.

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Assessment of stakeholder views on tourism management in a Venezuelan national park.

There is a need for new approaches to the management of tourism and natural resources in developing countries that recognise that there is often little tradition of stakeholder involvement in tourism planning and management and that, while wide and effective participation is to be encouraged, it is unrealistic to expect such participation to emerge quickly. The study evaluates recent trends and approaches in this literature and it develops two original conceptual frameworks for the management of tourism and natural resources in protected and other natural areas in developing countries: the Stakeholder and Resource Management Framework (STREM) and the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA). These related frameworks take into account the restricted character of public participation and the conflicts over development and conservation goals that are often found in tourist areas in such countries.

These two frameworks develop a new approach to stakeholder involvement in tourism planning and management by objectives, where appropriate levels of tourism and resource use are defined in relation to the views of the affected parties. Use is made of stakeholder identification and analysis techniques, including assessments of their resource dependence and political power. Stakeholder interviews are conducted in order to assess the affected actors and to develop tourism and resource management strategies that reflect their views. The opinions of affected parties are evaluated in relation to valued resources, what to conserve, levels and kinds of resource use, and likely responses to various management proposals. The frameworks and related stakeholder interviews provide a structured and systematic approach to consultation with affected parties in tourism and resource planning and management in contexts where previously there has been little public participation. They provide managers with a better understanding of actor perspectives, thus enabling them to make more informed decisions. It adopts an anthropocentric perspective on sustainable tourism and resource use that gives prominence to stakeholder views on acceptable levels and kinds of resource use for tourism in natural areas.

This study applies key aspects of both frameworks in the context of Los Roques National Park in Venezuela. This resulted in the identification of 21 stakeholder organisations representing tourism operators, government and NGOs, from which 30 representatives were interviewed, and also a decision pathway questionnaire was completed. Perceptions of the appropriateness of current tourism activities varied between different interest groups. Most stakeholders felt that the park's current tourist volumes were appropriate, but the degree of approval was highest for tourism actors and lowest for NGO members. Most stakeholders expressed concern about tourism-specific management problems. The management scenario considered most likely to be applied in the park in the future involves a growth in tourist numbers and related facilities together with increased tourism management. Differences between this scenario and the preferences of various stakeholders are identified, together with the tensions that may result. These results, and the use of the frameworks, have practical value for the park's management and for the management of similar natural areas in Venezuela and other less developed countries. The practical application of the frameworks and interviews is evaluated here in relation to their value as policymaking and management approaches, and the frameworks are also further refined in response to the lessons learnt.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Context to the study

Tourism in both developed and developing countries is increasingly seen as a vital component of the global economy. More and more countries are looking to tourism not only as a replacement for extractive uses of natural resources and for industrial activities, but also as a new economic opportunity that can bring considerable economic growth. Highlighting tourism growth trends, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO, 2000; 2001) recognises that this activity has now become a major element of commercial interchange, particularly between developed and less developed countries, suggesting that in the coming decade tourism will become the largest single sector of world trade, and that by 2020 there will be 1.56 billion tourists a year.

The gradual shift in production to the service sector and the diminishing economic returns from the sale of primary resources has prompted many less developed countries to turn to their natural areas as a source of economic benefit through tourism (Hannah *et al.*, 1998). In turn, this has led to the recognition of tourism's potential as a source of new economic returns to local populations that traditionally depended for their subsistence on these resources, and an increased awareness of the need to protect natural areas formerly subjected to extractive uses.

The emergence of new tourist destinations has also brought a new type of tourist, particularly from developed countries, who are increasingly seeking to visit areas perceived to be unspoiled and where they can experience first-hand contact with natural resources, such as wildlife, which they cannot normally experience in their own countries (Cater, 1993). According to Boo (1990:2), this growth in what has been termed as the ecotourism sector *"has rapidly evolved from a pastime of a select few, to a range of activities that encompasses many people pursuing a wide variety of interests in nature".* Accordingly, many governments in less developed countries have implemented policies for the

designation of vast tracks of their land as national parks or protected areas as a way to attract and develop tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). These protected areas would usually comprise regions of outstanding natural beauty, sometimes associated with characteristics of unique ecological, cultural or social value, which are included within some form of legal protection and regulated development (Boo, 1990).

However, the use of natural areas for tourism has also resulted in negative changes, often due to the lack of local knowledge and expertise, exploitation by external actors, and the search for short-term gains. These negative impacts include physical effects on the resources, such as environmental degradation, and also social, environmental, economic and cultural effects impacting on local people, such as on their unequal access to the benefits of tourism, the implementation of management measures that reduce their traditional access to resources, and their increased economic dependence on an often highly volatile source of employment (Richter, 1984; Alipour, 1996; Cater, 1993; Tosun, 2000).

According to Butler (1996), it is concern about the potentially negative effects of tourism's growth and its effects on destinations that prompted the search for ways to define limits to this activity. This led to the development of the carrying capacity concept, which in its original form consisted of defining the maximum amount of use or of visitors that a destination could withstand without degradation (Wall, 1982). Thus, a common response to tourism's negative consequences in natural areas, particularly in less developed countries, has been to identify some form of capacity and then, less frequently, to attempt to manage tourism within that capacity (Boo, 1990, Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996).

Management responses based on carrying capacity have typically resulted in less than satisfactory results, among other reasons because they tend to rely on expert consultation, in which specialists, along with area managers and other policy-makers, get to decide how to mitigate negative impacts, sometimes disregarding the interests of local resource users (Gregory and Keeney, 1994). The responses generated by early carrying capacity

approaches have also been directed mostly toward solving environmental problems, while the social and economic impacts, particularly with regard to local populations, have been largely ignored, resulting in unsolved or new problems and disagreement among those groups with an interest in the resources.

The failure of traditional carrying capacity approaches has been partly attributed to the fact that public representatives, who theoretically represent the wider public, may not adequately define the scope of questions for policy debate, nor adequately represent the diverse views and interests of affected parties (Keogh, 1990). This realisation has encouraged a gradual broadening of the carrying capacity concept, resulting in new approaches that give consideration to the management objectives sought by destinations and propose greater stakeholder involvement in public planning as key elements to overcome tourism management problems. Some of these approaches, such as the Limits of Acceptable Change technique (Stankey, Cole, Lucas, Petersen and Frissell, 1985), the Visitor Impact Management technique (Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990) or the Visitor and Resource Protection framework (USNP, 1997) pay significant attention to understanding the goals that the destination's managers are trying to achieve. Several commentators have also remarked on the need for increased public participation in the management of natural resources affected by tourism development, particularly by local communities affected by the increased use of local resources brought about by tourism (Sautter and Leisen, 1999; Boselman *et al.*, 1999; Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Brown *et al.*, 2001; Hardy and Beeton, 2001). They go on to suggest that greater public participation in decision-making in the planning process may not only bring more democratic empowerment to the decisions taken, but may also increase the knowledge and resources available for the process, and could result in a broadening of the planning options (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Murphy, 1985; Warner, 1997).

In the particular case of tourism, it has been suggested that the only analytical framework within which sustainable tourism can be delivered is one in which the stakeholders are identified and their concerns, values, goals and

responsibilities are analysed and incorporated into the management strategy (Robson and Robson, 1996). Increasing emphasis is being placed on involving the multiple stakeholders affected by tourism development in the tourism planning process (Yuksel, Bramwell and Yuksel, 1999). This involvement might help to identify a shared planning vision which is more politically legitimate, and which includes and responds to stakeholder views about appropriate tourism management and planning decisions for the destination. This evidence suggests that the application of Stakeholder Theory in the context of a planning process, particularly in relation to tourism and natural resources, could help to identify those participants who are relevant to the process, and might result in better solutions to management problems than would otherwise be possible.

However, the involvement of stakeholders in less developed countries in particular can be fraught with difficulties and problems peculiar to these contexts, where public participation in decision-making processes is the exception rather than the norm. The particular problems associated with public participation in these countries, or the lack of it, can lead to obstacles to the design and implementation of management proposals, sometimes severely curtailing or completely blocking management efforts. Under these circumstances, management frameworks are required that can be adapted in a pragmatic and context-specific way to the particular conditions of each country and indeed each destination. These frameworks should promote the use and management of the destination's resources according to goals informed and oriented by the needs and preferences of the local population and destination managers, but they should also be flexible enough to work with the level of community participation that is feasible in the destination, particularly where there are previously limited participative experiences.

In contexts such as those of less developed countries, where the alleviation of poverty and resource overuse are commonly perceived as primary management goals, any management framework should also be flexible enough to allow the consideration of objectives that do not necessarily prioritise resource conservation over other key management goals. This need for pragmatism and adaptability in the management of tourism is advocated by

Hunter (1997) and Munt (1992), who argue that there is no such thing as the single best approach to tourism planning or sustainability. This call for pragmatism and adaptability in tourism management is reflected in Hunter's (1997:864) statement that *"sustainable tourism must be regarded as an adaptive paradigm capable of addressing widely different situations, and articulating different goals in terms of the utilisation of natural resources"*, within which *"different levels of community involvement in tourism development decision-making are appropriate for different pathways of sustainable tourism"*.

1.2 The study research aim

As the previous review suggests, management frameworks are needed that can steer the development of tourism in natural areas so as to avoid or minimise its negative effects, and which are capable of adapting to the peculiar management needs and participation conditions found in less developed countries. Thus, one goal of this study is to develop a conceptual framework for the management of tourism in natural areas that might be successfully used under similar participation conditions of other less developed countries.

In order to fulfil this goal, the study has three main aims. The first is to develop a conceptual framework for the management of tourism and natural resources, and within it, a more specific framework that identifies and assesses under conditions of limited participation the stakeholders relevant to tourism management proposals, as well as their resource needs and management preferences. The study's second aim is to partially assess these conceptual frameworks in a natural tourist destination located in a less developed country. The third aim is to feedback and strengthen the frameworks based on the lessons learned in the light of their application.

To fulfil the aims of this study, a conceptual framework for stakeholder and resource management by objectives has been developed which links Stakeholder Theory to visitor management and natural resource management issues. The resulting framework for Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) is intended to address the causes of natural resource overuse in a

tourist destination and to guide the formulation of management actions directed at maintaining resource use at acceptable levels, with these levels defined according to the perceptions of relevant stakeholders. Only part of this framework is applied in this study, and its design is one of the original contributions of this research.

Within the STREM framework, a second conceptual framework was developed to identify and assess stakeholders relevant to the management proposals for a destination and to inform the decision-making process about their needs and management preferences. This framework for Stakeholder Assessment (STA) is intended to assist in the development of tourism and resource management objectives based on a stakeholder identification, analysis and consultation process that provides a more structured alternative for stakeholder participation than the public consultation steps of the LAC-type frameworks. The STA framework is intended to incorporate consideration of stakeholder needs and preferences with the sustainable management of the destination's natural resources, with the management goals defined in the context of stakeholder perceptions. The design and partial testing of this framework is another original contribution of the study.

The STREM and STA frameworks were partly developed based on existing literature on carrying capacity, visitor and natural resource management, and also on stakeholder identification, analysis and management. Both frameworks were developed deductively, partly by integrating existing literature and, in the case of the STREM framework, by putting together these two bodies of literature. The study will partially inductively test the STA framework, by collecting information in the field about a destination-specific stakeholder and resource management situation, by feeding this information into the framework, and by assessing whether the framework has analytical and practical value in this specific context.

1.3 The study research objectives

Hence, this study builds a framework for the identification and analysis of stakeholders relevant to tourism and natural resource management proposals in a destination. It does so by integrating Stakeholder Theory with LAC-type visitor management approaches. It also tests the developed framework through its partial application in a case study, this being the Archipelago Los Roques National Park, a nature-based tourist destination in Venezuela. In order to achieve these aims, the study considers eight specific research objectives, and these are presented here in relation to the study's main aims.

Objectives related to the first overall aim of developing conceptual frameworks

1. To develop a conceptual framework linking visitor and natural resource management issues to stakeholder analysis, with this framework for "Stakeholder and Resource Management" (STREM) intended to assist in the management of tourism in a less developed country under conditions of limited public participation. Only part of this framework is applied in this study.
2. To develop a conceptual framework for the identification of resource management planning objectives based on a process of "Stakeholder Assessment" (STA).

Objectives related to the second overall aim of assessing the conceptual frameworks

3. To apply the selected approach to identifying stakeholders relevant to tourism and natural resource management proposals in a tourist destination.
4. To examine the views of stakeholders on the resources in a tourist destination and on the issues or problems to be addressed in relation to tourism resource use.
5. To identify and evaluate stakeholder interests or needs in relation to a destination's resources and their management.
6. To evaluate the extent to which the stakeholders are interested in, and have the capacity to influence, the management of tourism and of the resources in a destination.
7. To develop and apply an approach to interviewing stakeholders about tourist

"carrying capacity" and natural resource management issues, with the interviews providing much of the primary research evidence.

Objective related to the third overall aim of revising and strengthening the conceptual frameworks based on the research findings

8. To review the lessons learnt through the partial application of the STA framework and to use these findings to revise and strengthen the conceptual frameworks developed in this study.

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is organised into 10 Chapters. Chapter 2 comprises the Literature Review and it seeks to review a range of tourism and resource management approaches, as well as to consider how Stakeholder Theory can serve as the basis for stakeholder identification and assessment in relation to tourism management. This chapter also reviews the problems of stakeholder involvement in less developed countries, and it ends with a discussion of the most recent thinking about approaches to tourism and natural resources management.

Chapter 3 examines the context of Venezuela and the Archipelago Los Roques National Park, reviewing the management of the Venezuelan national park system and how politics are a pervading issue at the national and local level in the management of tourism and natural resources in Venezuela. It also explains how tourism has developed in the Los Roques National Park as well as the distribution of responsibilities among the park's managing institutions.

Chapter 4 presents an overview of the conceptual research framework employed in this dissertation, and it explains how use is made of a synthesis of visitor management approaches and of Stakeholder Theory to produce a "Stakeholder and Resource Management" framework (STREM). This chapter also explains how the STREM framework is intended to address natural resource overuse by relating resource use to the levels considered acceptable by the destination's stakeholders. Within the STREM framework, a specific

framework is also proposed for the identification and assessment of stakeholders. This "Stakeholder Assessment" framework (STA) is intended to identify and assess the stakeholders relevant to the management of a tourist destination, as well as their potential influence on the destination's management.

Chapter 5 explains the research methods used, discussing in a step-by-step fashion how the STA framework was applied. This chapter also gives an overview of the steps that compose the STA framework, and how it relates to the remaining steps of the STREM Framework.

Chapters 6 to 9 comprise the results and analysis of the data obtained during the fieldwork. Chapter 6 identifies the stakeholders in the Los Roques National Park that are relevant to the tourism management proposals, and it evaluates their attributes. Chapter 7 deals with the interests or needs of these stakeholders in relation to the park's resources and to park management. Chapter 8 examines the strengths and weaknesses of the existing management of tourism and natural resources in Los Roques National Park. Chapter 9 deals with the resource management preferences and the "realistic" options available to stakeholders in the Los Roques National Park, and it does this by examining the stakeholders' preferred management scenarios and also the scenarios with the greatest probability of implementation.

Chapter 10 presents the conclusions to the study, by discussing the value of the STA and STREM frameworks, particularly within the context of tourism management proposals in a less developed country. This chapter also further refines the conceptual frameworks presented in Chapter 4, based on evaluations of the lessons learnt from their application to the case study situation.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the academic and practical context within which this study is situated. For example, it explained how tourism in both developed

and developing countries has become a major source of benefits but also a source of significant problems, particularly in destinations based on natural resources. It has touched briefly on why carrying capacity management approaches have failed adequately to deal with these problems, and how alternative approaches have been suggested to deal with them. Finally, it argued that the conditions for public participation and the goals sought in the management of tourist destinations within less developed countries require the development and application of pragmatic, adaptive management frameworks. The chapter also presented the overall research aims of this research study and the more specific objectives linked to them.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The main goal of this research is to identify and assess the views of stakeholders potentially affected by proposals for resource management in a protected area subject to tourism use, where the management actions are to be guided by objectives set by these stakeholders and where the end objective is to avoid resource overuse. Thus it is pertinent to review the current state of knowledge concerning visitor management approaches commonly used to achieve such objectives, including such approaches as Carrying Capacity, Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), Visitor Impact Management (VIM) and VERP (Visitor Experience and Resource Management Programme). Some of the weaknesses of these approaches are also considered, and other alternatives are reviewed.

Within the field of tourism management increasing importance is now given to the identification of management objectives, as well as the need for *"decision makers...to address difficult trade-offs explicitly"* (Gregory and Keeney, 1994:1035). In turn, this has led to a debate about who should determine what these objectives are. There is growing recognition that in a democratic society, a range of stakeholders have an interest in such decisions and hence ought to be involved in some way in influencing how these decisions are made (Bramwell and Lane, 2000). This might help to explain the growing body of literature in the field of Stakeholder Theory, and this literature could assist in identifying and assessing the stakeholders affected by tourism management proposals. Elements of this literature are reviewed here.

In establishing management objectives, it is necessary to consider the socio-cultural contexts that may influence the process. As the case study for this research is of a protected natural area in South America, it is important to consider the challenges of managing tourism and natural resources in less developed countries.

Finally, this chapter reviews the emerging paradigm within which many tourism and resource management studies appear to be converging. This paradigm recognises the rights of stakeholders affected by management processes to participate in decisions that affect them, as well as the potential for increased stakeholder participation to help achieve more sustainable resource management outcomes.

2.2 Commonly used tourism and resource management approaches

Many researchers suggest that the degradation of environmental and cultural resources in a tourist area can be avoided if the area's tourist use is managed within its carrying capacities (Butler, 1996; Getz, 1982, Getz, 1986). It was in the recreation field that the carrying capacity concept gained widespread use. At first, the focus was on biological and ecological issues, based on the hypothesis that increasing numbers of visitors would cause greater environmental impacts which could be measured through biological indicators (Manning *et al.*, 1996). However, researchers in this field soon realised there are critical dimensions of carrying capacity that are related to human values, and that the cultural and social aspects of the visitor experience had to be accounted for (Wagar, 1964; cited by Manning *et al.*, 1996).

The recognition of these cultural and social dimensions, particularly in relation to host populations, as well as the growing interest in avoiding the tourism's negative effects (Getz, 1982; Glasson *et al.*, 1995; Green and Hunter, 1992; McKercher, 1993; WTO, 1984), led researchers to look for increasingly sophisticated methods to limit tourist numbers (Getz, 1982; Glasson *et al.*, 1995; Green and Hunter, 1992; Johnson and Thomas, 1994; O'Reilly, 1986; WTO, 1985). Initially, the key to these methods hinged on establishing specific limits to the volume of visitors based on the destinations' physical or structural characteristics. However, these methodologies gradually expanded to acknowledge the existence of social and cultural limitations, such as visitor perceptions and management preferences of host populations. These limitations were not related to the amount of visitors that a destination was

receiving but were important to acknowledge if tourism's negative impacts were to be reduced (Williams and Gill, 1994).

Although intuitively useful and appealing, the carrying capacity concept has proven difficult to apply in tourist management, partly because there are inherent theoretical problems with the idea of 'capacity', and partly because some of the parameters to be measured are difficult to quantify. Wall (1982) points out that in its stricter sense, the concept of capacity implies a fixed limit, which contradicts the notion of inherent change associated with destination life cycles, whereby the amount of visitors that a destination receives is proportional to its level of development, moving from a few visitors in early development phases to mass tourism in later stages. He also argues that the same physical space could have very different capacities according to the management goals that are set for it, citing the different perceptions of 'adequate' capacity that the participants in individual or group activities might have.

Other problems inherent in the definition of carrying capacity are highlighted by Glasson *et al.* (1995) and by Williams and Gill (1994), who argue that there is little evidence suggesting that changes in the capacity limit of a destination translate into predictable changes in the area's ability to absorb tourist use, thus highlighting the difficulty of linking numerical carrying capacity indicators to the management of tourism impacts.

Lindberg, McCool and Stankey (1997) argue that carrying capacity often provides little or no guidance for practical implementation due to the concept being related to an evaluative criterion that reflects a desired condition. If this desired condition (for example, using criteria related to visitor satisfaction or 'adequate' conditions) is not clear and capable of being measured, then it will not be possible to determine the carrying capacity. They also argue that, although it is based on subjective criteria, the carrying capacity concept is perceived as being scientific and objective, creating further limitations because, instead of it being used as a management notion to describe the consequences of alternative use levels, it is expected to answer what the adequate use level should be in order to avoid tourism's negative impacts. Lindberg, McCool and

Stankey (1997) also state that the carrying capacity concept confuses management inputs with outputs, since the concept is typically related to visitor numbers, while management objectives are typically related to conditions. This makes it difficult for managers to establish how a given number of visitors would help them to maintain the area's resources in an adequate condition.

Some authors (Becker, Jubenville and Burnett, 1984; Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990; Shelby and Heberlein, 1984; Watson and Kopachevsky, 1996) suggest that tourism carrying capacity, although generally interpreted as a scientific concept, requires decisions based on judgement, which draw on the value systems of those applying the concept. Shelby and Heberlein (1984) argue that the implementation of carrying capacity involves both descriptive and evaluative components, the latter involving value judgements, and both components should be adequately integrated in order to achieve a capacity determination. As Burch (1984:494) argues, *"regulating access to public land is always an issue of politics, not a matter for decision by science."* He further argues that the exclusion of certain activities and type of users from natural areas is a matter of class conflict and not of scientific research, and the decisions required to implement such exclusions *"are issues of social equity and therefore central to the political process"* (p.495).

In response to the limitations of carrying capacity, some frameworks for the management of visitors and resources, such as LAC, VIM and VERP (Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990; Stankey et. al, 1985; USNPS, 1997), emphasise that if tourism is a desired alternative, then the area's management objectives should explicitly express the desired goals and related conditions, and the management measures should be directed toward achieving them. These desired goals and conditions are potentially conflictive issues that must be agreed on by the relevant parties. Table 2.1 presents an overview of these frameworks and their key characteristics.

Table 2.1. Main features of the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks for the management of visitors and natural resources (modified from Stankey *et al.*, 1985; Graeffe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990; USNPS, 1997)

FRAMEWORK	LAC	VIM	VERP
OBJECTIVE	Identify and establish appropriate resource and social conditions in recreational settings, and maintain those conditions through management	Reduction of visitor impacts in natural areas by identifying problem conditions, determining causal factors, and selecting management strategies that correct unacceptable impacts	Continuous management of visitor use in protected areas, allowing the reduction of impacts on visitors' experience and park resources
MAIN FEATURE	Focus on achieving and maintaining desired conditions rather than visitor numbers	Recognises that effective management involves both scientific and judgmental considerations, and that many alternatives are available to manage visitors	Focuses on impacts on visitors' experience and park resources created by visitor use, and proposes public involvement in management process
KEY STEPS	1. Identify area issues 2. Define Opportunity Classes 3. Select condition indicators 4. Inventory conditions 5. Specify standards for indicators 6. Identify alternative Opportunity Class allocations 7. Identify management alternatives 8. Evaluate and select management alternatives 9. Implement and monitor	1. Review data base 2. Review management objectives 3. Select key impact indicators 4. Select standards for key impact indicators 5. Compare standards and existing conditions 6. Identify probable causes of impacts 7. Identify matrix of alternative management strategies 8. Implement management measures	1. Assemble project team 2. Develop a public involvement strategy 3. Develop statements of park purposes 4. Analyse resources and visitor experiences 5. Establish potential zones of desired resource and social conditions 6. Allocate potential zones to specific locations 7. Select indicators, standards and implement monitoring 8. Monitor resources and social conditions 9. Implement management actions

One of the pioneer approaches that acknowledged the weaknesses of the carrying capacity concept is the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) framework (Stankey *et al.*, 1985). It was the first to propose the management of a natural area by objectives, these objectives being related to desirable social conditions and natural resources that are to be achieved through specific management actions. This framework calls for public consultation in its initial stage in order to define what constitutes the objectives and the desirable conditions to be achieved through the area's management. It also seeks feedback during the intermediate step of defining standards for the indicators

used to assess the condition of the resource and the social conditions, and for the final step of selecting management alternatives. The authors of this framework have recently argued (McCool and Stankey, 2001) that it offers adequate scope to involve stakeholders in the decision-making process, but in reality this involvement is not clearly articulated, and the whole process is likely to be largely manager-led. In the stages that require public participation, this framework suggests this will be achieved either through consultation, most notably when identifying and prioritising the issues or problems to be solved, or through feedback on decisions that the managers have already made.

The Visitor Impact Management (VIM) framework (Graeffe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990) recognises the importance of both scientific and judgmental considerations for effective visitor management in natural areas, and it also emphasises the importance of considering several strategies other than visitor quotas to reduce visitor impact. Like its LAC counterpart, this framework gives much priority to identifying acceptable conditions through the formulation of management objectives. According to its authors, this initial and critical step *"might include public consultation"* (p.11), with the use of focus groups and surveys being suggested as adequate means of collecting the stakeholder inputs. However, and in a similar fashion to the LAC framework, the process as a whole is largely conducted by managers. Indeed, it has a stronger expert-led orientation than LAC, with the public being consulted merely to inform the decisions taken by the managers or 'experts', or else simply to ratify the decisions that have already been made.

According to Pretty's (1995) typology of participation, the public participation processes of both VIM and LAC frameworks would appear to be located between his consultation and functional participation categories, where most of the information is controlled by the managers, and where the stakeholders tend to inform the decisions rather than make them. At best the stakeholders' participation would involve some interaction and some influence on the making of decisions, but the risk exists that some managers would invoke their participation only after having already taken major decisions, or

they would simply co-opt the stakeholders in order to make the process appear to be 'participative' to external funding or supervisory agencies.

The main motivation behind the design of the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) framework (USNPS, 1997) is the protection or enhancement of both the quality of a protected area's resources and the experience of its visitors. According to its authors, VERP is an adaptation of the LAC framework intended to address a wide variety of resource settings and visitor experiences, but placing greater emphasis on the involvement of stakeholders in the development of management decisions. Its authors contend that public participation is the only way to avoid the occurrence of disagreements and conflicts that would hinder or impede the implementation of management measures.

The VERP framework suggests that a range of concerned stakeholders should be included in the management exercise, particularly in the formulation of the goals to guide the process, and the framework also lists issues to consider when identifying and selecting possible participants from the public. However, it does not suggest a mechanism to organise stakeholder participation in the decision-making process, nor does it propose how to incorporate the results of this participation into the overall management process. Additionally, it prioritises the identification and participation only of those stakeholders that possess the knowledge or the resources either to support the process or to derail it. Thus, this framework implicitly leaves out those stakeholders that lack the knowledge, resources or power to enable them to participate and to support or hinder the management exercise. In principle, these weak and less influential stakeholders (such as local communities and tourists) tend to be those that are most affected by the decisions taken in the management process, and thus VERP may encourage the exclusion specifically of those groups who should be more involved. Presumably, this management framework would lead to functional participation in the public participation process, based in the categories in Pretty's (1995) typology.

In sum, several alternative tourism and resource management frameworks have appeared in response to shortcomings in the practical application of carrying capacity concepts. These frameworks are commonly used to manage visitors and resources in natural areas, and they all give some prominence to public participation as an element to be incorporated into their decision-making processes. Table 2.2 reviews the main characteristics of the public participation mechanisms suggested by these frameworks, and it also highlights the problems that might inhibit effective and appropriate participation.

Table 2.2. Key features of the public participation mechanisms suggested by the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks for the management of visitors and natural resources.

FEATURES	FRAMEWORK		
	LAC	VIM	VERP
GOAL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	• To identify desirable conditions • To provide feedback on manager decisions	• To identify acceptable conditions • To inform experts' decisions	• To formulate goals for the management process • To review and validate management decisions
MAIN FEATURES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	• Non-binding consultation	• Non-binding consultation, with some functional participation	• Functional participation • Decisions validated with stakeholders
MECHANISM TO IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS	• None proposed, as it relies on manager perceptions	• None proposed, as it relies on manager perceptions	• It suggests potential stakeholders, selected according to manager perceptions • It suggests the exclusion of weak or disadvantaged stakeholders
MECHANISM TO INCORPORATE STAKEHOLDERS' INPUTS IN DECISION-MAKING	• None proposed, although stakeholders' concerns should inform management goals	• None proposed, although stakeholders' concerns should inform management goals and stakeholders should provide some feedback	• Stakeholders' concerns should inform management goals • Stakeholders review management decisions
DRAWBACKS OF PROPOSED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	• It is manager-led • It is non-structured • Managers own the information and processes • There is limited stakeholder influence on the process	• It is manager and expert-led • It is non-structured • Managers own the information and processes • There is limited stakeholder influence on the process	• It is manager-led • It is loosely structured • Managers own the process • There is limited stakeholder influence on the process

Table 2.2 demonstrates two potential drawbacks in all of the reviewed management frameworks. The first drawback is that a clear method is not provided to establish and develop public participation into management processes. Second, a mechanism is not suggested for translating participation into meaningful management inputs. Thus, these frameworks may prevent stakeholders from having a real influence on key decision-making, as none of them provide a systematic mechanism that allows for the identification of potential stakeholders and for the inclusion of their views in the management process, with these steps being left to the discretion of managers.

So neither the LAC nor the VIM frameworks propose any structured mechanism that allows for the identification of stakeholders in a consistent way and the manager is given the responsibility of deciding who is important and who to incorporate into the process. Thus, Stankey *et al.* (1985) point out that *"the selection of a preferred (management) alternative will reflect the evaluation of both managers and concerned citizens"* (p.18), but they never detail how to identify those citizens, or how the selected management alternative will include their views about the proposed alternatives. Similarly, Graeffe, Kuss and Vaske (1990:11) suggest the incorporation of *"public consultation"* through focus groups and surveys to define management objectives, but without suggesting how to select potential stakeholders, and without involving them in the selection of management alternatives. By contrast, the VERP framework is somewhat more specific, as it suggests the general characteristics of groups to target and to engage. However, it also suggests that those stakeholders with low power or influence over the management process can be excluded, thus in effect ignoring the stakeholders who could potentially be affected the most by management decisions. The information and processes in all three frameworks are led and owned by the managers conducting them, with the stakeholders having limited influence on decision-making, with their level of participation located between consultation and functional participation (Pretty, 1995).

These commonly used tourism and resource management frameworks do advocate greater stakeholder participation, but they also appear to encourage an expert-led approach to decision-making, where public

involvement is mostly used to inform and validate decisions made previously by these experts, rather than to shape those decisions. In these frameworks, the managers and public representatives still take the place of the wider society in deciding which alternatives are best suited for the stakeholders they are representing, thus reducing the input that the public at large might have over processes directly affecting their lives.

2.3 The importance of stakeholder involvement in natural resource management

Several researchers have noted that in the course of making evaluations or taking decisions about the management of resources, public representatives have to make value judgements and choices that affect various stakeholders (Finn, 1996; Gregory and Keeney, 1994; Keogh, 1990). Sometimes these judgements and choices do not reflect the views or interests of the affected stakeholders, and the public representatives may not adequately define the scope of the issues that should be discussed during policy formulation. Hence greater stakeholder involvement is often advocated in tourism and resource planning, not only as a way to increase the number of policy options likely to be generated, but also as a way to avoid the rejection of the proposed plans and the re-negotiation of previously agreed policies with stakeholder groups who had felt inadequately represented (Gray, 1989). Other arguments for the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the planning process are the identification and incorporation of participants who, due to their power or influence, could broaden the identified planning options and could increase the available resources for the process (Gray, 1989; Warner, 1997).

Beside the practical reasons for stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes, some authors argue that there are also moral reasons to justify wider public involvement. For example, Donaldson and Preston (1995:67) argue that *"the interests of all stakeholders are of intrinsic value. That is, each group of stakeholders merits consideration for its own sake and not merely because of its ability to further the interest of some other group"*. Stakeholder participation can be seen as a tool that advances social justice in planning, as

well as the empowerment of the well-off groups that, according to Mark and Shotland (1985), should be the main beneficiaries of stakeholder-led planning exercises. Tacconi and Tisdell (1992) argue that planners have a moral duty to open up a participation space to the stakeholders affected by planning projects. They go on to suggest that the participation of various stakeholders in decision-making not only increases their empowerment and self-reliance, but also greatly increases the possibility that the project outcome would be sustainable. Drake (1991) also argues that the sustainability of projects is increased through a wider participation of affected stakeholders, with the variety of stakeholders being more likely to promote the varied economic, social, environmental and political concerns of sustainable development.

Increasing emphasis is being placed on involving the multiple stakeholders affected by tourism development in the tourism planning process (Jamal and Getz, 1995, Jamal and Getz, 1997; McCool and Moisey, 2001; Yuksel, Bramwell and Yuksel, 1999). This involvement might help to identify a shared planning vision which is more politically legitimate, and which includes and responds to stakeholder views about appropriate tourism management and planning decisions for the destination. However, the inclusion of multiple stakeholders in a planning process will rarely result in a total consensus among them, even within collaborative planning frameworks. Bruton (1980) and McArthur (1995) argue that public participation will inevitably produce conflicts, especially if it involves resource distribution, and the participation mechanisms should provide a framework to articulate and mediate these conflicts rather than to seek some unachievable 'consensus'. The application of stakeholder theory can help to identify and articulate the different types of conflict, and it might help participants in collaborative arrangements to reach some 'common ground' upon which to accept each other's positions, while still accepting their differences and related tensions.

In places where there is no tradition of joint working between stakeholders (particularly between planning authorities and local communities), it may be important to pay attention to the conditions required to be met before stakeholders are likely to become included within a management process (Finn,

1996; Gray, 1989). These preconditions to participation might include stakeholder 'targeting' (Warner, 1997), whereby those stakeholders who have legitimate and important views but who lack the capacity to participate in collaborative processes, can be provided with the means to enable them to participate on a more equal footing in negotiation and decision-making. According to Warner's (1997:418) normative position, addressing the conditions required for effective stakeholder participation is necessary in order *"to create an equitable basis for collaborative negotiations"*. In less developed countries, where planning processes have traditionally been managed in a top-down, non-participative fashion often by a strongly centralised government (Tosun, 2000), the recognition of other stakeholders along with their concerns and values could be an important precondition that increases their participation in decision-making processes affecting their lives.

Finn (1996) provides a different argument in support of a wider participatory approach when attempting to solve difficult, value-laden social issues. He argues that it is difficult for one stakeholder to define a 'problem' on its own when such issues are large or complex and when even partial solutions are out of the reach of any single entity. However, reaching an agreed policy in response to this type of problem is also difficult, due partly to the complexity of ensuring that all relevant actors are involved in the process. This might well be the case when addressing the issue of resource overuse in a tourist destination area. He goes on to argue that stakeholder theory can provide a framework to achieve a clear definition of the problem and to involve the necessary actors in policy-making (Finn, 1996).

This present research is premised on the notion that stakeholder theory can assist in the identification and analysis of stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management proposals, as well as in their eventual involvement in decision-making. Stakeholder theory can be used to understand carrying capacity issues more fully, such as by assisting stakeholders to define the acceptable conditions for resources of a natural area or the types of acceptable uses of those resources. The application of this theory can also help to identify the affected parties, to define the problems to be solved, and to allow

compromises to be achieved between the resource needs of stakeholders and the destination's conservation needs that are 'acceptable' for these stakeholders.

2.4 Stakeholder theory as a tool for stakeholder identification and assessment

Stakeholder theory has been described as a framework to enable an organisation to identify, assess, understand and incorporate the needs and concerns of the individuals and groups affected by its actions. According to Donaldson and Preston (1995), stakeholder theory has three major functions, the first one being descriptive, whereby it is used to describe characteristics of organisations. Secondly, stakeholder theory is instrumental, as it assesses and describes the consequences of using stakeholder management; and, third, it is normative, as it identifies the stakeholders of an organisation on the basis of their interests, and can be used to explain the behaviour of the organisation in regard to its stakeholders.

Stakeholder theory largely originated from the seminal work of Freeman (1984) in the field of strategic management, in which he redefined the purpose of business organisations. He argued that instead of maximising shareholder profits, an organisation's purpose must be to identify and to engage in the concerns of its stakeholders, and to meet its obligations to them. Freeman defined a stakeholder within a management context as *"any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives"* (Freeman, 1984:46). He goes on to argue that an organisation that takes into consideration its stakeholders in its planning framework will increase its chances of success over one that does not, because it will maximise the organisation's opportunities and survivability by avoiding possible threats originating from its stakeholders.

The application of stakeholder theory in a planning process requires the implementation of three separate steps; namely, stakeholder identification, stakeholder analysis, and stakeholder management. The first step refers to the

identification of those individuals or groups that are affected by the actions of the organisation. The second step, stakeholder analysis, is defined as the collection of *"information about groups or individuals who are affected by decisions, categorising that information, and explaining the possible conflicts that might exist between important groups, and areas where trade-off may be possible"* (Brown *et al.*, 2001:17). The third step of stakeholder management refers to the implementation of those strategies that allow an organisation to achieve its objectives, while also trying to meet in the best possible way the expectations of its stakeholders. Of course, some stakeholders may chose not to behave in altruistic ways and they may simply strive to optimise their own benefits.

Stakeholder theory has been applied to tourism, for example to provide a more ethical background to decision-making and as a guide to management decisions in relation to sustainable development goals (Robson and Robson, 1996). It has also been used as a planning and management tool in order to identify stakeholders affected by management processes and sometimes also to involve them in decision-making (Jamal and Getz, 1995; McCool and Moisey, 2001; Sauter and Liesen, 1999; Yuksel, Bramwell and Yuksel, 1999).

The next section briefly describes the conceptual background for each of the three steps of stakeholder analysis, and it explains how they relate to each other and might be incorporated into a tourism and resource management framework.

2.4.1. Stakeholder identification

If public participation is a necessary characteristic of a tourism and resource management framework, then it is desirable that a structured mechanism is provided that allows for the identification of stakeholders potentially affected by management proposals for resources they depend on. Freeman (1984) argues that any group who could affect or be affected by the actions of an organisation is considered to hold a 'stake' in that organisation and thus must be taken into account. However, for the purposes of this research the stakeholder definition of Bryson and Crosby (1992:65) will be employed,

where a stakeholder is defined as *"Any person, group, or organisation that is affected by the causes or consequences of an issue".*

Since the concept of stakeholders is so wide and all-encompassing, it is obvious that it is necessary to have a systematic approach to identify them in specific situations. Otherwise, this could easily become an inadequate and oversimplified short-listing of convenient parties, or even a never-ending task where the identification of those affected by a given process becomes an infinite spiral, with stakeholders continually being identified and considered (Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997).

Several approaches to stakeholder identification and selection have been suggested. Some approaches put the responsibility on the manager tasked with managing an issue, who then selects the groups that they consider relevant for an effective resolution of the issue. The criteria used by the manager to select these stakeholder groups could be geographical, such as according to the location to be managed and how potential stakeholders relate to the location, or perhaps socio-demographic, such as according to age, previous education, income and similar criteria (Boiko, Morrill, Flynn, Faustman, van Belle, Omenn, 1996). Other authors propose that this selection is carried out based on the manager's own personal perception of stakeholder importance, rather on the manager's use of other perhaps more 'objective' criteria (Carroll, 1993; Gregory and Keeney, 1994; Rowe, Mason, Dichel, Mann, Mockler, 1994).

Finn (1996) and Rowley (1997) argue in favour of a less manager-based approach to stakeholder identification, basing the selection process instead on the perceptions of the stakeholders themselves. In this approach the stakeholders are usually identified by applying a 'snowball' technique (Bryson, 1988), which consists of selecting an initial or core group of stakeholders affected by an issue, and then proceeding to interview this group in order to identify those individuals and organisations which, based on their own perceptions, are also affected by the issue. This process is repeated until few

new stakeholders are nominated, when it is assumed that all stakeholders affected by the issue have been identified.

2.4.2. Stakeholder analysis

The analysis phase of stakeholder assessment is oriented toward considering how the previously identified stakeholders can participate in the management process, as well as the benefits or threats that their participation (or lack of participation) can bring to that process. A particularly useful approach to stakeholder analysis is to assess the needs and interests of participating stakeholders, in order that these can be considered in the making of policies. The end result of most stakeholder classification frameworks is the production of a normative or prescriptive classification of stakeholders, and then actions subsequently are taken to manage the stakeholders in order to achieve the outcomes considered desirable. All the stakeholder analysis frameworks identify the potential stakeholders and then they try to determine what stakes they have in the relevant issues, and how they might affect a given process or its possible outcomes. Hence, invariably these frameworks are used to attempt to influence the outcomes of the process.

The most common approaches to stakeholder analysis are based on assessments of two stakeholder attributes: power and legitimacy. Stakeholder power can be defined as the ability of a given stakeholder to bring about the outcomes it desires, even in the context of opposition from other stakeholders (adapted from Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997). Similarly, legitimacy may be defined as the *"generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions"* (Suchman, 1955, cited in Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997:866). Most stakeholder analysis frameworks have in fact been limited to considerations of these two characteristics, which, however, tends to constrain stakeholder assessments to the weighing up of either the ability of different actors to influence a process, or else of their right to participate in the process.

Several authors (Bryson, 1988; Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Carroll, 1993; Harrison and St. John, 1994; Rowe, Mason, Dichel, Mann, Mockler, 1994) have formulated similar frameworks for analysing and managing stakeholders, mostly based on the two attributes of power and legitimacy. In these frameworks, the stakeholders are first identified and classified, and they are then analysed in terms of the opportunities and obligations that they create for an organisation or for an issue. Alternatively, they are classified according to the threats and advantages that they represent for the achievement of a certain outcome. Table 2.3 provides a summary of some key frameworks for stakeholder analysis.

Table 2.3. Main considerations and steps involved in key frameworks for stakeholder analysis (Developed from discussions in Bryson, 1988; Bryson and Crosby, 1993; Carroll, 1993; Harrison and St. John, 1994; Rowe, Mason, Dichel, Mann, Mockler, 1994).

	AUTHORS			
	BRYSON, 1988; BRYSON AND CROSBY, 1992	**CARROLL, 1993**	**ROWE *et al.*, 1994**	**HARRISON AND ST. JOHN, 1994**
Main considerations or steps	Identify stakeholders	Who are the stakeholders?	Identify stakeholders	Stakeholder identification
	Identify the organisational performance of stakeholders	What are their stakes?	Map the significant relations among the stakeholders	Stakeholder classification according to their stake and their influence
	Identify their stakes in situations and the possible outputs	What opportunities and challenges do the stakeholders present?	Assess the opportunities and threats presented by the stakeholders	Stakeholder prioritisation
	Assess the influence and importance of stakeholders	What responsibility does the organisation have for them?	Identify all stakeholder assumptions for generation of the strategy	Assessment of the needs of stakeholders and of the collection of ideas
	Identify the resources needed from the stakeholders	What strategies or actions should be taken to deal with them?	Evaluate the importance and certainty of stakeholder assumptions	Knowledge integration in the management process
	Stakeholder prioritisation	-	-	-
	Stakeholder classification	-	-	-

Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) depart from the more traditional use of power and legitimacy as the attributes to analyse stakeholders. They propose the use of a third attribute, this being the urgency of a stakeholder's claims, in

order to examine the importance of an actor in the context of a particular issue. This attribute is defined as *"the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention"* (p.864), and they couple this with the issues of time sensitivity (the degree to which delay is unacceptable to the affected stakeholder) and of criticality (the importance of the claim to the affected stakeholder). Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) assert that the addition of this attribute enhances stakeholder identification by differentiating those stakeholders who are likely to be more affected by an issue or process. As discussed subsequently, this research uses the attributes of legitimacy, power and urgency in its analysis of stakeholders.

2.4.3. Stakeholder management

According to Carroll (1993), the goal of stakeholder management is for an organisation to secure the objectives considered important by all the primary stakeholders, and these objectives should also be achieved in ethical and effective ways. He also argues that stakeholder management should assist in gaining improved knowledge about stakeholders, and this knowledge can then be used to predict their future behaviour. Other definitions are possible, however, which may be less altruistic or more instrumental (Brown *et al.*, 2001).

Carroll (1993) proposes classifying stakeholders as either supportive or non-supportive of the goals of an organisation, as an initial consideration for stakeholder management. This classification is achieved through the use of a potential threat and co-operation matrix. This matrix, originally proposed by Nutt and Backoff (1987, cited by Bryson, 1988:268), is used to classify the intentions and interests of other stakeholders in relation to the goals of an organisation, and it is intended to assist in the prediction of who will support or oppose that organisation's objectives.

Like Carroll (1993), Eden (1996) argues that the aim of stakeholder management is to anticipate and manage the dynamics of stakeholder attitudes and actions. This may be achieved by identifying those actors that may support the achievement of a given desired goal and then by strengthening their power of advocacy, or it could be achieved by reducing or managing the power of

those actors that may resist the sought-after goal. Eden's classification is based on consideration of the power of different stakeholders to influence the management goals of an organisation, as well as consideration of the level of interest that the stakeholders have in securing these management goals. Based on these two characteristics, he develops a two-dimensional matrix of a stakeholder's potential influence on the achievement of a management goal, categorising the stakeholders as either 'crowd' (low interest and low power), 'subjects' (high interest and low power), 'players' (high interest and high power) or 'leaders' (low interest and high power).

Once all stakeholders have been classified according to their power and interest, Eden (1996) suggests that the focus of the analysis should shift to identifying potential coalitions among the stakeholders. The objectives should be to encourage the formation of stakeholder coalitions that support an organisation's goals, and to block any potential oppositional coalitions. Coalitions that could be oppositional might be blocked by anticipating the attitudes that coalitions could take, by manipulating the potential coalition partners, or by attempting to re-focus these coalitions. In the case of those stakeholders whose behaviour could be predicted but not influenced ('leaders'), it is advised that they should be included in an environmental monitoring process. According to Eden's approach, the potential influence of the 'players' and 'leaders' must be addressed if an organisation is to achieve its goals. However, he also argues that the other stakeholders still need to be taken into account.

This brief review suggests that the incorporation of stakeholders into any tourism and resource management proposal will require at a minimum the consideration of two definite stages, these being the identification and the analysis of stakeholders. However, to realise the full potential and usefulness of these steps it is also necessary to include a third stage, that of stakeholder management, which allows the incorporation of stakeholders' needs and interests within the management process. Although the use of stakeholder theory in tourism and natural resource management is very scant and recent, it has been applied quite widely in the fields of business administration and

management, and this section has reviewed the quite extensive body of this literature that spans three decades.

This review has shown that stakeholder theory can be advantageously used within the context of decision-making processes for tourism and resource planning and management. These advantages come from the improved assessment of impacts created by policies and projects and from the more accurate assessment of stakeholders' opinions and preferences, thus providing a well-informed base upon which decisions can be taken. As one of the keys of stakeholder identification is the assessment of stakeholder power, it potentially can also facilitate the empowerment of disadvantaged groups, thus helping to maximise collaboration and diminish conflicts during decision-making processes. Within the context of natural resource management, Grimble and Wellard (1997) suggest that stakeholder theory can be used to identify and discern between multiple objectives and concerns and between the different interests and preferences of stakeholders. They go on to argue that stakeholder theory provides a way in which the needs and interests of the less powerful and under-represented can be highlighted, thus providing a tool for stakeholder empowerment.

2.5 Stakeholder consultation and collaboration in tourism and resource management

In most natural areas that attract tourists in less developed countries it is common to find that there are several government institutions as well as diverse NGOs and business interests involved in the area's use. Each of these stakeholders has its own particular objectives and agenda. Thus, deciding who should be involved in management decision-making processes in these areas becomes a complex problem for any lead organisation.

Shelby and Heberlein (1984) contend that in the determination of the social carrying capacity of an area the most important precondition is that the affected stakeholders agree on the potentially conflicting objectives that should guide regulatory measures intended to manage the area within its capacity.

These objectives often revolve around deciding on the type of experience that the area should provide for its visitors, as well as deciding on 'adequate' capacity levels for the area's activities. Shelby and Heberlein also indicate that the formulation of management measures to implement the social carrying capacity of an area calls for a degree of consensus among the affected stakeholders, hastening to add that this consensus is usually difficult to achieve.

Some authors argue that consultation could help to guide the process of creating management alternatives that are acceptable to most stakeholders (Long, 1993; Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell, 1999; Mowforth and Munt, 1998), thus reducing stakeholder conflicts and helping to create more consensus. Consultation is located on the lower end of the typology of participation described by Pretty (1995), because stakeholders participate by providing information, but process managers define problems, gather information and control analysis, thus giving stakeholders little influence over the decisions being made. In this sense, consultation has been criticised because it has been argued that participants hear and are heard, but they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded (Arnstein, 1969). Nevertheless, consultation still represents a useful form of public participation in the management process. As Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell (1999) argue, it may not always be necessary to establish complex forms of participation, such as collaboration, in order to achieve relatively meaningful stakeholder participation in tourism planning, as continuing consultation with stakeholders during various stages of the planning process may provide opportunities for a two-way interchange of information between the tourism planners and stakeholders. However, some authors stress that consultation can easily fall short of involving the stakeholders sufficiently so as to avoid substantial conflicts, or to produce management options that adequately reflect the concerns of all affected stakeholders.

Collaboration has been proposed as an approach that can overcome the shortcomings associated with other less participative approaches. Thus, in contrast with consultation, during collaboration there usually is a face-to-face dialogue between all participants, giving opportunity for mutual learning and

shared decision-making (Carr, *et al.*, 1998). In a collaboration process it is necessary for each stakeholder to provide resources over which they have exclusive control in order to achieve the desired goal. This creates interdependence between stakeholders, promotes each stakeholder's ownership of the process and its results, and potentially leads to mutual benefits for all participants (Gray, 1989; Selin and Beason, 1991). Further, the goals pursued in collaborative arrangements tend to be so complex that no single party on its own could achieve them (Gray and Wood, 1991; McCann, 1983; Wood and Gray, 1991). In a collaboration process a range of stakeholders participate in the formulation of goals, and their views constitute the base upon which those goals are framed. Within this process, problems that are common to each stakeholder can be formulated and delineated and attempts made to resolve them. Other characteristics of collaborative processes include the *"formulation of shared rules, norms and structures"* (Wood and Gray, 1991:146), thus suggesting that formal relationships and structures develop between stakeholders participating in these types of arrangements.

The search for consensus-building tools has been the focus of attention for many authors in the public policy and tourism fields, and several have argued that collaboration theory could provide a framework to achieve greater consensus around tourism planning issues (Getz and Jamal, 1994; Jamal and Getz, 1995, Jamal and Getz, 1997; Selin and Chavez, 1995; Simmons, 1994). In particular, collaborative frameworks could be an important step to avoid conflict in the allocation and use of resources (Gray, 1985; Gray and Wood, 1991; McCann, 1983). Thus, collaboration theory could be used to develop a practical framework for the formulation and resolution of tourism management issues related to resource allocation, including the associated conflicts over values.

In the specific case of a resource management problem, the goals sought by those involved in a collaborative process might include achieving a more efficient allocation of resources and agreeing the rules for access to the resources (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Brandon, 1993; Keogh, 1990; Selin and Chavez, 1995; Simmons, 1994). The potential benefits of involving multiple

stakeholders in collaborative arrangements in the field of tourism planning are now receiving increased recognition. For example, Bramwell and Lane (2000:1) argue that *"stakeholder collaboration has the potential to lead to dialogue, negotiation and the building of mutually acceptable proposals about how tourism should be developed"*. Some authors (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Murphy, 1985; Timothy, 1999) argue that such arrangements can increase democratic participation in decision-making through a better representation of the stakeholders who are affected by the decisions. Collaborative arrangements might be difficult to manage, but they potentially can bring *"democratic empowerment and equity, operational advantages, and an enhanced tourism product"* (Bramwell and Lane, 2000:2).

Robson and Robson (1996) have also argued that in an ethical approach to tourism, stakeholders should be identified and the relationships among them enhanced. Their concerns, values, goals and responsibilities should also be analysed and incorporated into management strategies. They go on to suggest that this is the only analytical framework within which sustainable tourism is likely to be delivered effectively in the long term.

It has been argued here that tourism and resource management processes are complex problems, with resolutions that tend not to be attainable by any single party. Thus, if such processes are to achieve some degree of success, it is necessary to involve a wide range of stakeholders in defining the causes of problems and in developing policy responses. The identification and involvement of diverse stakeholders through consultation and collaboration processes appear to represent useful yet complex tools that might contribute to successful consensus-building, and they may help to promote stakeholder empowerment and the democratisation of decision-making processes. Stakeholder assessment, consultation and collaboration can be seen as interconnected, but increasingly complex ladders of stakeholder involvement, where at the bottom rung (stakeholder assessment) the interests of the actors can be easily asserted, but their control over processes is minimal, to a much higher rung (collaboration) where stakeholder involvement and ownership is very high, but attaining results can be a complex and challenging process.

Deciding which process shall be used to gain stakeholder involvement and consensus will be subjected to many factors, such as the context where decisions are made, or the degree of previous participation that stakeholders have experienced.

2.6 Common problems of natural resource management in less developed countries

The design and implementation of management proposals for natural resources and visitors in natural areas are traditionally fraught with problems and obstacles, which is perhaps unsurprising as many stakeholders are involved. However, such proposals for natural areas in developing countries tend to present additional difficulties that are relatively unique. These problems can hinder the implementation of management strategies, sometimes severely restricting the results or even derailing management efforts. The discussion reviews some of these problems and the consequences they may have for the design and implementation of tourism and resource management strategies.

Common problems for natural resource management found in many developing countries, particularly in tropical areas, are the high levels of poverty, high rates of population growth, and the predominance of primary sector economic activities (Hannah *et al.*, 1998). Hence, the majority of the population depend on natural resources for their subsistence, and the population pressure on these resources is continually increasing. This situation often creates conflicting interests whereby relatively untouched natural resources are perceived as valuable tourism assets, but also as a ready source of much needed income for local populations through more direct uses (Cater, 1993). Poverty also tends to promote an orientation to resource exploitation for short-term economic returns.

Many natural areas in developing countries are designated as protected areas in order to satisfy the needs of conservation and tourism interests, but often this is done without consultation with local populations. This disregard of the needs of the host population makes the adoption of management measures

more difficult and unpopular as it often restricts their use of the natural resources, particularly if it is perceived that the management restrictions favour visitors, who are perceived as outsiders by the local population (Cater, 1993; Crandall, 1994). However, when these local communities are 'open' (*"those that foster all sorts of exchanges and want to get hold of new technologies"* Schluter, 1994:256) and they also benefit directly from tourism, then there can be strong support for increased tourism, even at the expense of substantial social, cultural or environmental change. In such cases this may result in the degradation of national parks if it is felt that their protection might involve limiting tourism development.

Mowforth and Munt (1998) provide striking examples of how some conservation programs have been implemented to satisfy the needs of the tourism industry and of government at the expense of local populations. They recount how, through the creation of protected areas in Kenya, the Maasai have been gradually excluded and restricted from their own land to curb their 'detrimental' effects, while tourism has been stimulated in these areas, often with far more detrimental consequences. They discuss how Maasai dwellings have been removed from areas which where later specifically assigned for tourist accommodation, and how their cattle have been excluded from areas deemed as 'archeologically sensitive'. Further, the tourists were later allowed to visit these areas, causing much more damaging effects than the Massai's cattle.

Often tourism development in natural areas in less developed countries is brought about in the interests of developers and tourists from more developed countries (Cater, 1993; Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Olsen, 1997). Thus, outsiders with limited knowledge of local circumstances may decide on the characteristics of these developments, which can impose unrealistic demands on the natural resources and on the managers of the areas designed to protect these resources (Schluter, 1994; Olsen, 1997). Schluter (1994) argues that many tourism management initiatives in Latin American countries are the result of foreign initiatives and are largely funded by industrialised countries, and that these outside interests tend to require the use of external advisors. Since these advisors often lack local knowledge and are required to assist in many

countries, she argues that this often leads to *"the phenomenon of 'if it's Tuesday this must be Panama and if it's Wednesday it must be Zimbabwe'."* (Schluter, 1994:254), and that this results in the application of recipes with few alternatives and limited flexibility and adaptation to local circumstances. In relation specifically to tourism planning, Tosun and Jenkins (1998) similarly argue that most contemporary planning approaches were developed in the context of the socio-economic, political and human resource conditions of developed countries, and that the transfer and implementation of these approaches in developing countries may be wholly inappropriate without elaborate and complex adaptations to the particular conditions of these countries.

A common occurrence in developing countries is that government institutions that are supposed to protect and manage natural resources actually encourage their overuse, supporting tourism development at the expense of resource overuse and often doing so in ignorance of their own management policies. In the case of the development of beach tourism facilities in Jamaica, Olsen (1997) argues that the government has a history of subverting the good intentions of environmentalists, often opposing their attempts to protect fragile natural areas from development. Henderson (2000) describes how government policies in many less developed island nation states create barriers to sustainable tourism management, such as through the absence of political will, the lack of appropriate planning mechanisms, and the prioritisation of growth over adverse resource effects. She adds that with less developed nations it is essential to consider the role of the political system, because these systems and their *"official economic and social policies generate particular tensions and determine the context within which decisions are taken and policies made"* (Henderson, 2000:260).

Schluter (1994) suggests two significant reasons why governments in Latin American countries can be the key reason why plans for environmental management in tourist destinations often fail to succeed. First, she argues that with few exceptions the most senior public officials with authority over tourism are appointed for political reasons, their term in office being subject to the will of the person who appointed them. Thus, in many cases *"they are expected to*

provide political responses and not technical ones...they consider it more important to sign an agreement than to carry out a project" (Schluter, 1994:255). Secondly, technical experts in the public administration are often subordinated to the political authority, and they run the risk of not being promoted or even being fired if they disagree with the official guidelines or with the wishes of political appointees or of politicians. Thus the technical experts tend to avoid decisions or actions that might be perceived as critical of government priorities or ideology.

Several authors note that the substantial differences of power among stakeholders in less developed countries is a pervading issue that frequently affects the character of tourism management (Alipour, 1996; Few, 2001; Horochowski and Moisey, 2001; Morah, 1996; Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Richter, 1984; Tosun, 2000; Twyman, 2000). For example, in developing countries it can be very difficult to encourage individuals and groups with a common interest to collaborate with each other for the purpose of building a consensus. A significant reason for this might be a traditional mistrust between different parties, where past 'collaboration' attempts have been used as pretences by each party to further their own agenda at the expense of others (Alipour, 1996). In such countries both consultation or collaboration with stakeholders may also be discouraged because there is little political tradition of joint working between the public and private sectors and between central and local government (Alipour, 1996; Richter, 1984). In an analysis of obstacles to urban development policy implementation in Nigeria, Morah (1996) argues that key influences distorting the objectives for the development of the country's new capital were *"the non-participatory character of the process...and the then military government's attitude toward public participation in decision making"* (Morah, 1996:98).

Among the factors hindering the promotion of more sustainable tourism, Mowforth and Munt (1998) highlight the manipulation of participation and the take-over of decision-making processes by local elites. The effects of manipulated participation are also highlighted by Twyman (2000), who found that when a conservation management project in Botswana appeared to have a

sound participatory approach, it was seen on closer study to be *"essentially a planner-centred form of participation"*, in which *"few choices are available to the community and they are encouraged to follow government recommendations"* (Twyman, 2000:332). Mowforth and Munt (1998) highlight several factors commonly found in less developed countries that hinder the promotion of more sustainable forms of tourism, and these are summarised in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4. Factors that may hinder the attainment of sustainability in tourism development in less developed countries (adapted from Mowforth and Munt, 1998).

FACTOR	EXPLANATION
Manipulated participation	Proposals for local or community participation are imposed and directed by government officials or consultants, leaving little room for genuine inputs or real decision-making power with the locals.
Local elite asserting control over the decision-making processes	The representatives of political and economic elites in relation to tourism issues will seek to increase their benefits and strengthen their power through further development of the activity, including marginalising the participation of less powerful stakeholders.
Conflicting interests among government institutions	In less developed countries there may be several government institutions with overlapping responsibilities and different priorities for tourism development, which can result in conflicts and inadequate management.
Economic factors having precedence in decision-making processes	Governments in less developed countries are eager to increase their income in hard currency and tourism is perceived as an easy and fast way to achieve this. Thus, the maximisation of income may take precedence and override any concerns about the social or environmental effects of tourism.

Tosun (2000) also describes how community participation in developing countries is limited by factors inherent to these societies, which appear to act at operational, structural and cultural levels, and that are beyond the control of local communities. One of the main operational factors highlighted by Tosun is the centralised structure of government in most developing countries, where a central government office may resist attempts to implement participative approaches, as this will entail sharing power and resources with other stakeholders. He also contends that limiting factors of the structural type tend to be self-sustaining, and thus, for example, privileged economic and political elites in developing countries tend to be the main beneficiaries of 'democratic'

governance. Further, they tend to use that power, already built-in within the legal system, to protect their interests while excluding the less advantaged from any participation in decisions that might threaten their hold on power.

Tosun (2000) also mentions cultural limitations that might affect participation in developing countries, a major one being the limited capacity of many people to participate and to influence decisions affecting their lives. He argues that the biggest challenge for many people in developing tourist destinations is *"mere survival, which occupies all the time and consumes their energy"*, thus making participation in tourism development decision-making *"a luxury that most communities can not afford"* (Tosun, 2000:625). He contends that these operational, structural and cultural limitations *"may be an extension of the prevailing social, political and economic structure in developing countries...and...thus, it may be naive to suppose that (a) participatory tourism development approach will change the existing structure of a local tourism industry in a developing country without changing (the) dominant socio-economic and political structure of that locality"* (Tosun, 2000:626).

In an analysis of community involvement in planning processes for protected areas in Belize, Few (2001) discusses how the imbalances of power between planners and communities, as well as the persistence of top-down patterns of decision-making, had resulted in participation processes that were manipulated and tokenistic. He advances the concept of containment, understood as *"the strategic management of public involvement in planning so as to minimise disruption to preconceived planning goals"* (Few, 2001:112). He goes on to suggest that containment can be applied by managers of participation processes in developing countries for the purposes of avoiding conflict, excluding dissent, and controlling knowledge and procedures. The use of containment strategies *"ensures that a project ostensibly engaging local involvement progresses to completion on time and within pre-defined parameters"* (Few, 2001:112), thus avoiding deviation from predetermined objectives and from the expenses of cost and time of more engaged participation.

Some commentators argue that the particular circumstances of less developed countries highlight the need for management frameworks able to adapt to the particular social and cultural conditions in which they are to be implemented (Hunter, 1997; Munt, 1992). Such management frameworks should give consideration to stakeholders' needs and involve them in decision-making processes to the extent that is practical and viable given the particular social and cultural characteristics of each destination. Hence, Hunter (1997:851) argues that the concept of sustainable tourism is *"an adaptive paradigm which legitimises a variety of approaches according to specific circumstances"*, and as such it should be adapted to the particular characteristics of tourism development in different cultures. Thus, management strategies should be able to encompass the world-views and ethical stances of the cultures within which they are to be applied. As Hunter (1997:858) argues, *"different interpretations of sustainable development may be appropriate for developed and developing countries"*, as in developing countries the need for greater economic development might be an imperative if they are to overcome some of their debt and poverty problems, even if this development comes at the cost of some degree of environmental degradation. On the issue of who should be involved in deciding the priorities and paths that tourism development should follow to be regarded as sustainable, Hunter also notes that different levels of stakeholder involvement in decision-making might be appropriate or possible in different circumstances. These differences may arise from the fact that local communities would not always necessarily support conservation objectives if they clash with their needs or development preferences, and, even if that is not the case, these stakeholders might not have access to participation mechanisms that allow them to express their preferences.

The effects that the particular circumstances of developing countries can have in relation to tourism planning and resource management are numerous and complex. This section has shown that some of these effects arise from specific social, economical and political characteristics in these countries, while others can be the product of trying to implement and adapt largely western, developed world management practices which are not well suited to these countries. These problems are further compounded by the poor public

participatory tradition that tends to exist in these countries, with many having authoritarian regimes and paternalistic and centralised governments that tend to take decisions at all levels of public life, without much or any participation from affected stakeholders. These circumstances require tourism and resource management frameworks that can adapt to the particular goals and participatory conditions that may be encountered in less developed nations.

2.7 New approaches to tourism and resource management

Tourism researchers have remarked on the need for increased participation by the public and other interest groups in the management of natural resources affected by tourism development, with particular emphasis often put on involving local communities affected by the increased resource use (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Brown *et al.*, 2001; Boselman *et al.*, 1999; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Moisey and McCool, 2001; Sautter and Leisen, 1999). Consideration is given here to selected new approaches to stakeholder participation in the management of tourism, including how they incorporate wider participation in the policy and management decision-making processes. Attention is also directed at the potential problems and hidden drawbacks that these approaches may encounter in practice.

McCool and Stankey (2001) argue that any method for managing tourism access to a natural area must be culturally appropriate, as otherwise it will not be judged as socially acceptable and the area's managers will be unable to enforce policies for access regulation in the long-term. They consider that all such policies *"are a political rather than a scientific question"*, and their value-laden character suggests that they really are public choices (McCool and Stankey, 2001:396). Gaining social acceptance for management decisions is an important reason why the public should be involved. McCool and Lime (2001) also maintain that the public has an essential role in determining the objectives for a protected area, because their values, beliefs and priorities must underpin these objectives. They argue that setting management objectives is a process of social judgement, which needs be informed by science but ultimately it has to be made in the realm of politics and values. Hence, one of the most

significant questions to be answered in the process of setting management objectives is how to chose which perceptions count the most. They conclude that systems established for the management of tourism and natural resources should focus on establishing a mechanism that will allow the affected stakeholders to *"gain a legitimate, constructive foothold in the planning process"* (p.385) and give them a *"voice to articulate the concerns and values involved"* (p.386). Further, Moisey and McCool (2001:350) argue that only through the involvement of affected and interested stakeholders is it possible to achieve *"a clear vision of sustainable development goals"* that is required to successfully guide tourism development.

Krumpe and McCool (1997:18) argue that in any protected area planning process *"there are numerous occasions where values play directly in the decision making process"*, and that *"these decisions are intrinsically subjective and political"*. Thus, the planning process becomes embedded within a politicised context, where there are fundamental disagreements about decisions to be made, and where the potential exists for stakeholder groups to block the implementation of management proposals that do not match their values and expectations. If the implementation of management measures is to have practical success within these politicised contexts, then it is necessary for participants from all affected groups to be involved in a dialogue that allows them to learn and which ensures that their interests are represented. Furthermore, they should also be encouraged to deliberate on controversial issues so that informed judgements can be made, and they must be assisted to reach a high degree of consensus about the proposed actions.

McCool and Lime suggest even in a 2001 paper that the well established methods of LAC, VIM and VERP provide adequate vehicles for public participation in planning to take place. While these management proposals are quite well-known and the LAC method has been extensively used for some time (Borrie, McCool and Stankey, 1998; McCool, 1994; Sidaway, 1995), a number of new management approaches have been advocated more recently in the specialised literature of tourism and resource management. These new approaches try to address the issues of public participation and the social

values supporting decision-making in more explicit and fully developed ways, giving more prominence to the issues of participation, power sharing and consensus building than is the case for LAC and the other common visitor management methods.

One new approach to management that incorporates increased public participation is the Environmentally Based Tourism Development Planning Model developed by Dowling (1993), which proposes a management framework that seeks to integrate conservation and tourism development at a regional scale. This framework for tourism and environmental conservation attempts to identify and promote those tourism attributes that are environmentally compatible, and it emphasises the role of people as an integral and essential part of the ecosystem. Hence, the framework incorporates the opinions of managers, tourists and the host community within the management process. However, in terms of its application this model is very much planner-led, as the manager leading the planning procedure is responsible for guiding the overall process, informing its objectives, and putting together and assessing the management proposals. In this model, the interaction with potential stakeholders is mostly based on consultation, with the results of this consultation informing the decision-making process, although there is no necessary requirement for the manager to be swayed by the opinions thus identified. Another potential drawback of this planning proposal is that the identification of the objectives that guide the process is *"carried out by literature review, discussions with government, regional and local managers as well as by informal discussions with residents and tourists"* (Dowling, 1993:21), thus suggesting that traditional centres of power are given more consideration than local communities during the objective-setting stage.

A few authors (Few, 2001; Krumpe and McCool, 1997; Twyman, 2000) note that some planning processes which advocate participatory approaches have built-in mechanisms that allow traditional centres of power to retain much of their decision-making authority while claiming to be 'participative', thereby they mask tokenism or manipulated participation by other stakeholders. This exclusion of less powerful stakeholders might be the result of inadequately

conceived planning processes that give greater weight to planning or technical agencies (Twyman, 2000), or it might occur through such complex mechanisms as consensus seeking among unequal partners or containment processes. Seeking consensus sometimes *"implies that the planner identifies like-minded citizens who can agree with the planning decision and form the nucleus of support for a consensus to occur"* (Krumpe and McCool, 1997:18), while containment seeks *"to minimise social conflict, dissent and overall disruption to the primary goal of producing and completing"* a management programme (Few, 2001: 116).

In a discussion of one attempt to establish a comprehensive visitor management framework for the Banff-Bow Valley area in Canada, Ritchie (1998) explains how the approach relied heavily on defining the level of 'appropriateness' of certain activities, and how this led the decision-making process into a number of 'value traps'. He argues that these value traps were created by the wide range of views held by the stakeholders in this environmentally sensitive area, these being based largely on personal value systems that in principle have equal validity but would lead to strongly differing and even opposing management options. He concludes that in order to achieve a viable management plan, *"all stakeholders must make a genuine effort to reach a consensus concerning how best to develop and implement the policies and the kind of management system that will enable, encourage and facilitate the achievement of an acceptable balance"* (Ritchie, 1998:310). In his view, this consensus should strive to balance the various development possibilities for this sensitive area and if this consensus did not emerge through negotiation then it will have to be resolved through a ballot or through litigation. Similarly, Moisey and McCool (2001) highlight the requirement that all stakeholders achieve a consensus about what the management system is trying to achieve in a tourist destination, while admitting that *"this is a daunting task, for economic and social systems are filled with competing claims as to desired goals and methods, conflicting ideologies...and ill-defined judgements about what is important"* (p.344).

In this context, one new approach specifically attempts to help stakeholders to agree about the fundamental question of what is important in an area and why. This approach uses the concept of Environmental Capital (CAG Consultants, 1997) and it is based around the guiding principle of 'what matters and why' in relation to the environmental resources in an area. It hinges on the identification of those specific characteristics that make a place important for the sustainability of an area, and of how that place should be managed in order to improve on its sustainability, or at least not to detract from it. Significant emphasis is put on the need to understand and respond to the views and values of the public, particularly at the local level, a level where the decision-maker is perhaps most likely to fail to understand the systems of belief and values in relation to the area's environmental resources. However, as with other participatory management methods, the public consultation step is fully left to the discretion of the decision-making manager who leads the process, with this manager deciding what level of public involvement is adequate, who should be involved, and how they will be involved (CAG Consultants, 1997).

Farrell and Marion (2002) argue that while the more common visitor management methodologies (LAC, VIM, VERP and VAMP) have several advantages for their successful application, they tend to require long time scales and demand extensive financial and personnel resources in implementation. They argue that these particular characteristics tend to disqualify them for application in the majority of Central and South American countries where the authorities in natural areas tend to be understaffed and poorly financed, and where visitor pressures can sometimes be so great that there is a need for immediate action. To overcome these limitations, they propose an alternative approach that they call the Protected Area Visitor Impact Management (PAVIM) framework. In the PAVIM framework, Farrell and Marion propose that the steps of indicator selection, monitoring and standard selection that are found in the LAC technique should be replaced by the use of an expert panel. They suggest that this will make the management process faster and cheaper than is the case with LAC, but it also has similar strengths that help to produce viable and relevant management proposals.

Farrell and Marion (2002) argue that the PAVIM framework specifically incorporates public participation at several stages of the management process. They go on to identify who this public might be and they suggest how they might be involved during the steps of identifying the value of the area, the adverse impacts on the area, and the management objectives for the area. According to these authors, the participants should include *"local residents, visitors, and other stakeholders wanting to participate in decision-making"* (p.40), and these stakeholders should be assembled according to *"the number of people involved and the contentiousness of the issues being considered"* (Farrell and Marion, 2002:40). However, they do not propose any structured way in which this process might be accomplished, and they give significant weight to the decisions of managers in the selection of participants, arguing that *"managers play a significant role in developing public participation programmes since they are charged with balancing the needs and interests of...stakeholders with resource protection mandates and management constraints"* (p.40). This would suggest that, in spite of advocating the importance of public participation, this framework is based on a manager-led process where the risk remains that consensus will be imposed rather than developed or built interactively, and where disagreement and conflict are contained.

Sautter and Leisen (1999) suggest that Stakeholder Theory can be used as a normative planning tool for tourism development that can help in the identification of stakeholders affected by a tourism proposal, and that it can promote the incorporation of their views into the planning process. They go on to argue that for organisations to be able to manage their stakeholders effectively, they must be capable of identifying their stakeholders and the stakes they hold, as well as managing their relationships with them in ways that balance their interests with those of their own organisation. However, the practical application of Stakeholder Theory to facilitate decision-making processes in tourism and environmental management is relatively new. Hence, Gregory and Keeney (1994) are among the first authors to advocate the systematic identification of multiple stakeholders and of consultation with them as a means of increasing the available options in relation to tourism decisions

involving trade-offs. However, their suggestions remain within an expert-led management approach.

As with many other researchers on the fields of tourism and business management (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Mark and Shotland, 1985; Robson and Robson, 1996; Tacconi and Tisdell, 1992), Sautter and Leisen (1999) take a moral stance to the value of using Stakeholder Theory to encourage wider stakeholder participation in tourism decision-making. They argue that all possible stakeholders should be identified, and that all these stakeholders should be integrated into the management process. During this process *"the basic premise (is) that all stakeholders' interests have intrinsic value"*, irrespective of other assessments of the value of these particular interests or stakes (Sautter and Leisen, 1999:316).

In order to involve all stakeholders in a tourism planning process, Sautter and Leisen (1999) propose a multiple stakeholder identification process. This would involve an historic analysis of tourism developments in order to identify previously interested parties, and also a *"proactive scan"* to consider interest groups who might be affected in the future by the planning process and who could contribute to its success. However, they do not identify whether some cut-off procedure should be used in this stakeholder identification, or how the identified stakeholders would be integrated into the management process. Further, they do not explain how to avoid the problems of control and direction that collaboration theorists such as Gray (1989) warn about in relation to working with several stakeholder groups. While advocating participation by as many stakeholders as possible, Sautter and Leisen also suggest that the process should be managed and directed by the perceptions of the planner, who in the end should still decide who and what 'really counts'. In their concluding remarks, these authors argue *"that planners must proactively seek to include those stakeholders agreeing with the planners' strategic orientation"* (Sautter and Leisen, 1999:325), which might suggest that their management approach could be based largely on tokenism and manipulated participation.

The identification and involvement of multiple stakeholders in management processes and decision-making appears to be the direction in which most tourism management approaches are converging. Yuksel, Bramwell and Yuksel (1999) argue that the incorporation of stakeholders' views increases the chances of success in tourism planning by reducing the conflicts and costs associated with poor planning and limited implementation. In a review of approaches that can be used to identify the stakeholders affected by tourism development, Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell (2000:290) argue that stakeholder identification and involvement is *"likely to promote consideration being given to the diverse issues affecting sustainable development"*. They further contend that stakeholder identification and involvement *"is important for inclusive collaborative approaches to planning, such as the development of partnerships"* (p.292). They also suggest five different approaches that can be used in assessments of the stakeholders who are affected by tourism development and who might participate in collaborative planning arrangements, and they advocate the use of specific approaches according to the objectives sought from the planning process.

Hardy and Beeton (2001) make the case that the identification of stakeholders and assessments of their perceptions are key approaches that can facilitate the attainment of sustainable tourism objectives in natural destinations. However, these authors do not put forward a specific structured method by which these stakeholder assessments could be implemented systematically so as to inform management decisions, thus weakening the value of their proposal.

Brown *et al.* (2001) present perhaps the most valuable of the recent frameworks for the inclusion of stakeholders in resource-management decision-making processes, this being related to resource management in coastal areas. It is particularly valuable as it does indicate specific ways of incorporating stakeholder analysis and inputs into management processes. In their framework, they also propose the application of trade-off analysis, which is described as *"a tool that can help decision-makers understand resource use conflicts and stakeholders' preferences for management"* (p.8). Stakeholders

are considered within the management procedures in relation to the following steps or stages:

- The identification and classification of the stakeholders and of their interests.
- The identification of alternative future development scenarios that should be assessed by the decision-makers.
- The identification of the main issues and concerns of the stakeholders, and these issues and concerns are then used to formulate the management criteria that guide the decision-making process.
- The making of estimates about how each alternative development scenario affects the management criteria previously formulated.
- The involvement of stakeholders in assigning priorities to the management actions that need to be taken.
- The building of consensus among the stakeholders in order to find management scenarios and actions that are acceptable to all, and this involves the use of the information and management priorities identified previously.

In order to identify stakeholders affected by a management proposal, Brown *et al.* (2001) propose the use of written information sources to establish a continuum of stakeholders at different geographical scales. This approach to stakeholder analysis is similar to that proposed by Boiko *et al.* (1996), as it relies on the perceptions of the manager in order to identify those actors considered to have a stake in the management proposals. They also suggest a mechanism for stakeholder classification that is fundamental in deciding who should participate in the management process. This framework is based on the influence and importance of the stakeholders in relation to the process. This stakeholder importance is defined as *"the degree to which the stakeholder is considered a focus of a decision to be made"* (Brown *et al.*, 2001:24), and the stakeholder influence is related to the level of power that the stakeholder is perceived to have. Although the process of trade-off analysis proposed by Brown *et al.* (2001) promotes the participation of the many stakeholders affected by a management decision, the initial steps of stakeholder identification and classification still rely mostly on the perceptions of the process manager,

and thus this leaves room for distortions to take place in the selection and inclusion of stakeholders in the management process.

Although there is significant convergence in the tourism literature about the advantages of involving stakeholders in participative arrangements, a note of caution has recently been raised by Lovelock (2002), who asserts that for some stakeholders there are instances in which it may be more advantageous not to participate in consensus-building approaches. If these stakeholders are perceived to be less powerful or less legitimate than their counterparts, and if they hold significant differences in values and goals, Lovelock argues that they can gain more by not participating in co-operative arrangements. He contends that by being conflictual in their approach, such as by rejecting other stakeholders' claims, and by forcing change in line with their own beliefs, with, for example, lawsuits or legal proceedings, these stakeholders are more likely to succeed in incorporating their particular goals on a co-operative arrangement. Lovelock views counter the prevailing notion that consensus building is the best way for stakeholders to achieve their objectives, instead endorsing the benefits of conflict and dissent in democratic societies.

This brief review of more recent tourism and resource management approaches suggests that greater priority is now being placed on identifying and involving stakeholders whose interests are affected by either the use of natural resources in protected areas or by the regulations established to manage the visitors in these areas. Tourism and resource management is moving into a paradigm of enhanced stakeholder participation, where it is considered necessary to involve all the actors affected by tourism development within the planning and management processes. However, in spite of this advocacy of greater stakeholder participation, almost all the approaches reviewed here fall short of giving detailed suggestions as to how such participation could be engendered, managed and incorporated effectively within the planning process. None of the contributions establish a normative framework within which such participation might be managed. These recent proposals also continue to give much weight to the perceptions of the process manager, such as in relation to deciding who is affected and what is important within the decision-making

process. In effect this limits the value of stakeholder participation by constraining it within the insights, understanding and prejudices of tourism and environmental managers.

2.8 Conclusion

One of the key objectives of this study is the identification and assessment of stakeholders related to tourism and resource management proposals. Hence, this chapter reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of some well-established approaches used to manage visitors in natural areas, including carrying capacity, Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), Visitor Impact Management (VIM) and VERP (Visitor Experience and Resource Management Programme). The review established that visitor management in natural areas has moved from a search for fixed visitor numbers to a focus on identifying management objectives and resource conditions considered adequate for an area. This shift has also emphasised the need for greater stakeholder participation in decision-making processes. While many tourism and resource management studies advocate this approach, details of how it is to be structured and operationalised are relatively less common.

This chapter also showed that the tourism and management literature is increasingly arguing that affected stakeholders should participate in decisions that affect their lives. Stakeholder Theory is also being proposed as a systematic means to identify and involve the parties affected by these decisions. The involvement of stakeholders in decision-making in visitor and natural resource management is now often regarded as important for these processes to be successful, and this review identified the main reasons why this is considered to be the case.

This chapter highlighted the influence of the political and socio-cultural context on the character of management objectives and it identified some of the challenges faced by managers implementing proposals for the management of tourism and natural resources in less developed countries. It was also argued that management frameworks need to be adapted to the particular

circumstances of the participation practices and of the development priorities of less developed countries.

This chapter also reviewed more recent literature on tourism and resource management, and on stakeholder participation to promote more sustainable outcomes from tourism development. Finally, the chapter evaluated different proposals for the involvement of stakeholders in tourism and resource management decision-making, and it was concluded that there are few proposals that provide detailed, structured and consistent frameworks for stakeholder identification and participation in such decision-making.

Chapter 3

The Los Roques National Park

3.1 Introduction

Developing countries are complex places where the management of tourism and natural areas faces characteristic problems, particularly regarding the participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes. The management of these areas has traditionally been done with little, if any, consultation with affected stakeholders, and involving them in decision-making requires the development and application of management frameworks that are adapted to these conditions. This context provided the background for this study's approach and the ensuing frameworks that constitute one of this study's key objectives. These frameworks, which are explained in Chapter 4, were developed taking into account the characteristics and difficulties of stakeholder participation in developing countries, and their application is particularly suited for these countries. It is felt to be important to explain this context before describing the conceptual framework in Chapter 4 as the context of the problems of stakeholder participation in national park management in developing countries is so influential in the development of the framework.

The aim of this present chapter is to describe the characteristics of the area chosen as a case study to assess the applicability of the conceptual framework. The Archipelago Los Roques National Park, off the central coast of Venezuela, was chosen as the case study. The reasons why this natural area was chosen are examined in detail in section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4, while section 2.6 of Chapter 2 provides an in-depth examination of the problems faced by resource managers in less developed countries. This present chapter presents background information on Venezuela and on Los Roques National Park.

This chapter explains the development of planning policies in Venezuela and it shows how political and economic factors have hindered land-use planning and related implementation work. It also briefly recounts how the management of natural resources in Venezuela has been affected by these

factors. It then describes Los Roques National Park, highlighting characteristics that have made it attractive to human settlers, explaining why and how the park was designated, and describing how tourism has developed in the park. The discussion also explores the distribution of management responsibilities between the park's authorities, describing how there has been a succession of management institutions, culminating in the current and sometimes conflictive relationship between the Venezuelan National Parks Institute (INPARQUES) and the Los Roques Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA). Finally, the chapter examines how policies are formulated and implemented in Los Roques National Park, with an emphasis on how tourism and natural resources are managed.

3.2 Politics and management in Venezuela

3.2.1. Policy-making in Venezuela

After the dictatorial period that ended in Venezuela in 1935, the country increasingly turned to planning in order to secure economic development and prosperity. This planning tradition gained a firm status in 1958, with the creation of CORDIPLAN, the Central Co-ordinating Planning Office, which focused all economic decisions on one national planning agency. Several studies on Venezuelan planning practice during the 1960s and 1970s (Allen, 1977; Friedmann, 1966) praised this system and its resulting regional development and co-ordination, reflecting great optimism at that time about the country's potential for development, particularly due to Venezuela benefiting from booming oil revenues due to rising oil prices during the 1970s.

However, the success of the Venezuelan planning effort has been severely curtailed. As early as 1977, Allen noted that in spite of its huge growth, the Venezuelan economy and society continued to rely heavily on government spending, and in turn the government was greatly dependent on oil revenue, so that the implementation of long-term planning depended critically on decisions made by other oil exporting countries. This problem was further complicated by the inextricable and long-standing association of planning with politics in Venezuela. The undertaking of some projects and neglect of others due to the personal preferences of leaders, the appointment of political *protégés*

without adequate qualifications in key technical positions, the dependence of most activities on the approval of key political figures, and the lack of compromise and disregard of differing views by the political faction in power, represented major hurdles that limited the success of the best planning efforts (Allen, 1977). Thirty years after Allen described this situation, planning in Venezuela is still affected, albeit to a greater or lesser extent by the same factors, resulting in the persistence of environmental, economic, social and cultural problems (Arraiz-Lucca, 1995; Barroso, 1997). Venezuelan planning has been characterised by a succession of planning proposals from each new government, with previous government proposals being abandoned by the next administration and with the new policies usually not fully implemented before the cycle was repeated (Barroso, 1997).

3.2.2. Natural resource planning and management in Venezuela

The first specific law (the Forest Law) regulating the use of natural resources in Venezuela was decreed in 1910, but it was only in 1965 that natural resource and protected area management was integrated in one institution, the Ministry of Agriculture (Buroz, 1998). Responsibility for managing these resources initially rested with the Superintendence of Natural Resources in this ministry, and this Superintendence formed the basis of the new Ministry of Environment in 1976. This Ministry was created in order to integrate the dispersed responsibilities for natural resource management, and to encourage their rational use in order to promote the country's development (Azpurua, Buroz and Useche, 1975; cited by Buroz, 1998). The main planning tools of the Environment Ministry are the Environment Law of 1976, which established the requirement to plan and regulate the use of government-owned lands, and the Law for Territorial Organisation (Venezuela, 1983), which granted the Ministry legal authority to establish "special administration regime areas". These areas are subject to specific laws, and they include national parks and other protected natural areas (Buroz, 1998; MARNR, 2001).

The first institution in Venezuela charged with managing national parks and other protected areas was the National Park Service, established in 1958 as a Division of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure (Amend 1992; Delgado,

1992). The management of these areas was later affected by the Law of the National Parks Institute, which created the National Parks Institute (INPARQUES) in 1973, with the specific mission to administer the "special administration regime areas" with a protective purpose, namely national parks and natural monuments (Fundambiente, 1998; MARNR, 2001). INPARQUES was originally created by the then National Parks Service Division within the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, but it was subsequently attached to the Environment Ministry after its creation in 1976, although it was a semi-autonomous or arms-length organisation (Amend 1992; Delgado, 1992).

Hence, the responsibility for managing the national parks was allocated to a specific institution in 1958 (a Division in the Ministry of Public Infrastructure), but the country's natural resources as a whole were not specifically managed until 1965, and then only by a different institution (a Superintendence in the Ministry of Agriculture). These authorities were not integrated within one institution until the creation of INPARQUES in 1973, this being attached subsequently in 1976 to the Environment Ministry. However, the national parks were not formally defined and regulated in Venezuelan law until the decree of the Law for Territorial Organisation in 1983 (Venezuela, 1983), which created the "special administration regime areas" that included national parks. This complex history has meant that the management of protected areas in Venezuela has suffered from a dispersion of institutional responsibilities, a succession of institutional reorganisations, and an inadequate legal framework to support government action.

Several commentators argue that the administration of Venezuela's natural resources suffers from the same political, technical and financial problems that permeate other aspects of Venezuela's governance (Ammend, 1992; Buroz, 1998; Matus, 1987; Vitalis, 2000). A study carried out by the Environment Ministry into its own effectiveness (MARNR, 1980) concluded that their internal organisation and distribution of responsibilities had not produced the expected results, with projects not being fully implemented or deviating from their original objectives. The report attributes this shortcoming to internal

technical inconsistencies, lack of inter-departmental co-ordination, and technical deficiencies in their own staff.

There has been an acute lack of continuity in the policies and administration of Venezuela's natural resources. During the three years of the current government's administration there have been five Environment ministers, two of whom initiated a 're-organisation' of the Ministry before they were removed, in turn removing key technical personnel and disbanding or regrouping several departments. Over this short period there were three different INPARQUES Directors. The Venezuelan NGO Vitalis (2000) concludes from a review of the country's environmental situation that the main environmental management problems are the weak governmental administration, which has resulted in particular in the degradation of protected areas, along with the Environment Ministry constantly being reorganised in recent years. They interviewed government, NGO, business, press and university representatives who are familiar with Venezuela's environmental policies, and they found that 81% of them considered that the effectiveness of government's environmental management was poor to average (Vitalis, 2000). This suggests considerable dissatisfaction with the government's management of natural resources, and it is indicative of the persistence of these problems in Venezuela.

The shortcomings in Venezuela's management of natural resources led Matus (1987:219) to conclude that *"planning inefficiency favours and stimulates a governmental style dominated by irrelevancy and improvisation, where the more significant actions are associated with spasmodic and late reactions to the problems that explode in front of our eyes"*. He concludes that improvisation is a substitute for planning, with efforts made to repair damage which sometimes cannot be repaired, instead of preventing the damage in the first place. According to Zambrano (1988:156), these problems are increased by the lack of public participation in decision-making: *"a good deal of the population is not interested in taking part in deciding the issues that affect them, choosing instead to delegate decision-making without any checking as to how that delegation is used"*. But Zambrano (1988) contends that the government *status*

quo is also at fault as it has not developed the mechanisms to encourage more participative behaviour among the public.

In sum, in Venezuela there are severe problems that prevent the effective design and implementation of policies for natural resource management. These problems include a lack of continuity associated with constant government reorganisation, a lack of co-ordination and technical expertise among key personnel, an improvised and largely reactive management style, and a lack of public participation in decision-making.

3.2.3. Tourism management in Venezuela

The Venezuelan government first formalised its tourism responsibilities in 1936 within a newly created Ministry of Agriculture, this involving the setting up of a Direction for Tourism and Sport (MARNR, 1997). In 1938 the country's first Tourism Law was approved, being superseded in 1973 by a second Law that established a Ministry for Information and Tourism (CORPOTURISMO, 1993; MARNR, 1997). However, this Ministry was soon reorganised, with the information role moved to a separate Ministry and with tourism responsibilities being transferred to a 'Venezuelan Corporation for Tourism' (CORPOTURISMO) with the rank of a Ministry and with a Director who is directly appointed by the President. The current Tourism Law was passed in 1992, with this legal framework reflecting the increasing importance attached to tourism by the Venezuelan government (CORPOTURISMO, 1993). In 1992 tourism was, after oil and industrial production, the country's third most important economic activity in terms of foreign currency earnings, it employed 5% of the labour market, and the government was seeking to develop it into the country's second most important source of hard currency (CORPOTURISMO, 1993).

Venezuela's tourism industry had been quite modest before 1983, when a currency devaluation made it one of the cheapest tourist destinations in the Caribbean (CORPOTURISMO, 1993). The number of tourists entering the country increased three-fold from 1983 to 1986, and by 1988 the country received 700,000 international visitors. However, Venezuela lacked the

infrastructure to handle this sudden increase and, in spite of the country's ambitious tourism projects and optimistic projections about tourism growth (Mendelovici, 1999), visitor numbers have never surpassed the 800,000 attracted in 1990 (CORPOTURISMO, 1993; Dvorak, 2000). In recent years there has been a steady decline in tourist arrivals due to Venezuela's deteriorating economy and its growing reputation for political instability and for the left-leaning 'revolutionary' tendencies of the current administration (Dvorak, 2000; Grau, 2000). There has been a 40% drop in tourist arrivals between 1998 and 2001, with a fall from 685,000 to about 400,000 visitors (Salmeron, 2000; www.eluniversal.com, 2002).

Turning to tourism management in Venezuela's national parks, it was only in 1993 that INPARQUES officially recognised the increasing importance of the national parks for tourism development and the diversification of the country's economy, as well as the increasing risks of degradation brought about by increased tourist use (INPARQUES-MARNR, 1993). In 1993 a policy document established INPARQUES policies for tourism and recreation in national parks, and it recognises their legal responsibilities to provide opportunities for public enjoyment in the parks, while also *"taking care not to affect the integrity of the natural resources contained in them"* (INPARQUES-MARNR, 1993:4). It acknowledges the inherent tension between these two responsibilities, but suggests that this could be resolved adequately using their legal powers for park management. These powers are contained in the 1956 Soil, Water and Forest Law, the 1983 Law for Territorial Organisation, and also each park has a individual management plan and use regulations. Further, there are *"...the discretionary measures that can be established by the park's superintendents...and the Institute president"* (INPARQUES-MARNR, 1993:6).

According to INPARQUES guidelines, public use should only be allowed in a national park if it meets at least one of three characteristics. The first is that it has natural attractions of sufficient public appeal, such as beaches; second, that the park is near a large urban centre; and third, that the park has a local population that can benefit from tourism as an income source. These guidelines dictate that the permitted recreational activities in the parks are those that both

"promote the enjoyment of the park through a direct association between visitors and resources...and which are consistent with the protection of those resources" (INPARQUES-MARNR, 1993:8). However, this public document does not explicitly spell out what goals are sought by the promotion of public use of the parks, and although the word tourism is included in its title, it always focuses on recreational uses. It is also notable that local populations are only briefly mentioned as one of the reasons why public use might be allowed, but it does not take them into account when deciding if and what uses are appropriate for the park.

Several commentators have noted (Amend, 1992; Filatov, 1997; Gutic, 1993; La Rotta, 2001) that INPARQUES has lacked the financial and human resources to adequately manage the vast territory included in the national parks. These resource deficiencies have worsened in recent years as INPARQUES budget has been reduced and it has suffered a drain of technical personal and a constant rotation of its top managerial staff. INPARQUES is currently trying to supplement its budget by granting tourism concessions for 'sustainable developments', but their ability to adequately supervise those concessions must be questioned given the recent failures to implement the World Bank agreement of 1995, through which they were loaned US$ 95 millions to improve the management and infrastructure of 20 national parks. Because of INPARQUES's inability to implement their own proposals, in 2001 the World Bank reduced the loan to US$ 37 millions. By then INPARQUES had also scaled down the planned improvements, and these only benefited two national parks and they were to cost much more than originally anticipated (La Rotta, 2001).

Hence, it was only in 1976 that responsibility for tourism management was assumed by an specific institution, and is only after 1983 that the country attracted substantial numbers of international visitors. Thus, the international tourist industry in Venezuela is relatively recent and the government has only had a short experience in its management. The government experience of tourism management in national parks is even shorter, with the first policy document only produced in 1993 by an INPARQUES response to increasing

tourism pressure in its protected areas. INPARQUES does not appear to have clear goals for the public use of national parks, and past and recent experience suggests that INPARQUES lacks adequate capacity to manage these protected areas.

3.3 Los Roques National Park

3.3.1. General development of Los Roques National Park

A 1967 report by the Los Roques Scientific Foundation to the Venezuelan government requested the long-term protection of the Archipelago Los Roques due to its ecological importance and fears about excessive pressure on its fishery resources and about the uncontrolled development of holiday houses in some areas of the park (Amend, 1992). The decree establishing Los Roques National Park was passed in 1972. It was the first marine park of the current 43 within the Venezuelan national park system, and it remains the only one not to include continental mainland within its limits. The park's limits form a square covering 221,120 Hectares, mostly ocean. The archipelago has an ovoid shape, being about 36 km long and 25 km wide (Amend, 1992; AUA, 1998; Payne, 2001). As it is located 160 km. north off the Venezuelan coast, it is relatively isolated and free from the perturbations generated by human activity (Figure 3.1). The Archipelago comprises more than 50 islands and 200 cays and sandbanks, which were formed by the growth of coral on a deep rock platform. It is Venezuela's largest coral reef ecosystem (Amend, 1992). There are two extensive barrier reefs, in the North and South of the park, and these enclose all the islands making up the archipelago within a shallow water lagoon, 1 to 5 metres in depth. The reefs and islands support abundant fish and bird life as well as extensive mangrove forests (Gutic, 1996). The park has an important lobster fishery, producing about 90% of all lobster consumed in the country (Payne, 2001). The park also boasts extensive beaches of white, powdery sand, surrounded by crystal-clear waters. The beaches and shallow lagoons of the archipelago provide refuge for 92 bird species, 50 of which are migratory and use it as a mid-route rest point (Gutic, 1996). For this reason the archipelago was designated a RANSAR site for international wetland protection in 1996 (AUA, 1997).

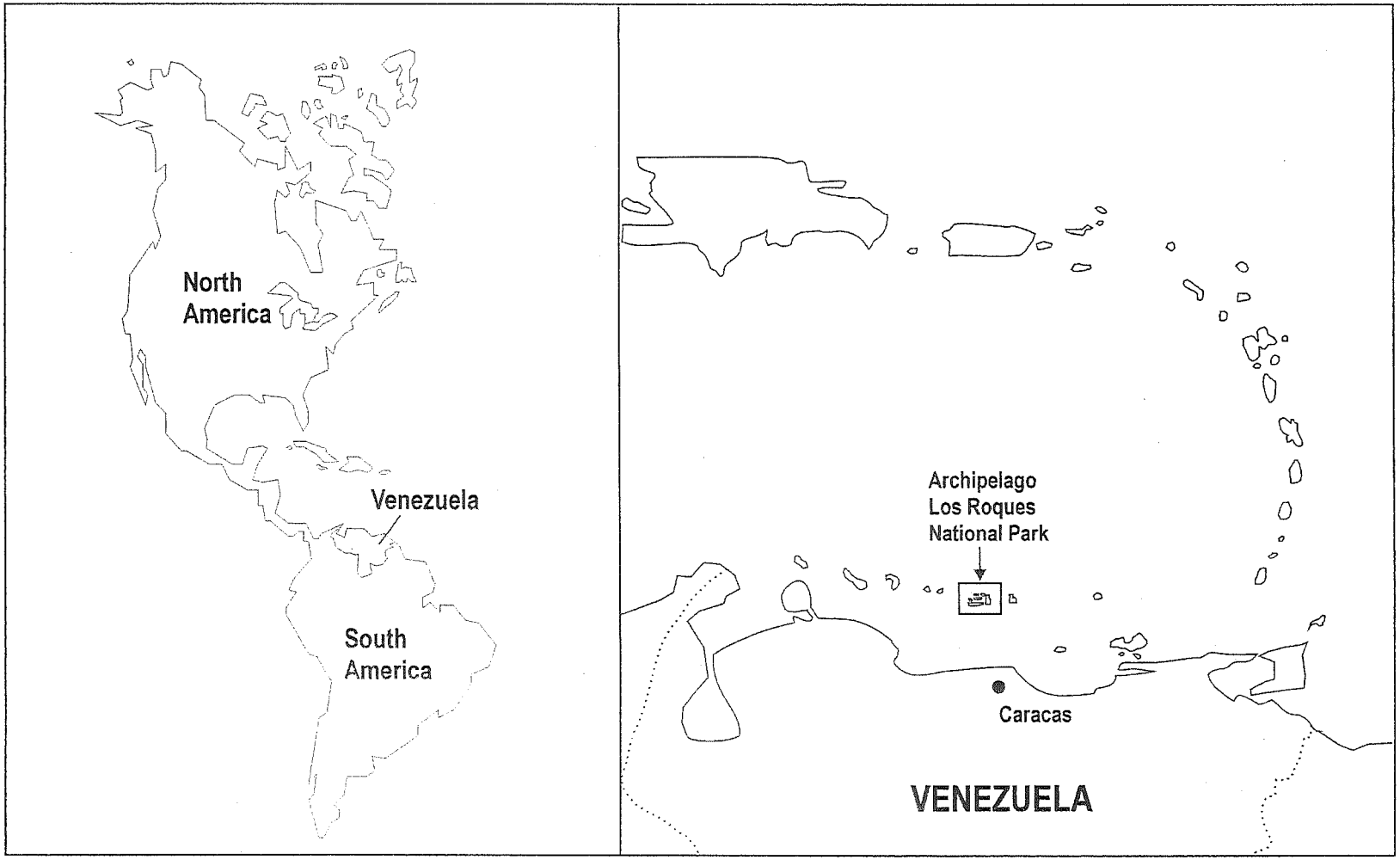

Figure 3.1: Location of Venezuela and the Archipelago Los Roques National Park

Access to the park is by plane or boat. The public airport is in the Northeast, on Gran Roque island, where the local population and all tourism facilities are concentrated. There is another landing strip for private use at a scientific research station on Dos Mosquises Island, in the Southwest. Most visitors come by plane from Caracas, Venezuela's capital, and from Margarita island on the East coast (Gutic, 1993). Besides Gran Roque village, the only other permanent settlement is on Madrisky island, and this consists of a small group of privately-owned holiday homes. Most tourism activity is concentrated around Gran Roque island, particularly on the beaches of nearby Francisky island (Amend, 1992) (Figure 3.2).

There was no permanent human settlement on the islands until approximately 1936, when a small group of fishermen who travelled there periodically from Margarita island, about 500 km away on Venezuela's North coast, decided to settle there (Amend, 1992). This population experienced a gradual decline due to the harsh living conditions, but the subsequent development of tourism reversed this trend, with the population growing from 586 in 1988 (Amend, 1992) to an estimated 1500 in 1999 (Sanchez, personal communication), of which about two-thirds are descendants of the original settlers. This local population, known as Roquenos, is concentrated on the largest island of the Archipelago, Gran Roque, which initially was a small fishing village and which has since kept many of its traditional ways. This community was practically isolated from the mainland and lacked the most basic facilities until about 1970 when the park started to become a popular tourist destination (Ammend, 1992; Gutic 1993).

The management of Los Roques National Park is based on geographical zoning, which sets out the objectives and types of activities that can take place in each zone, and which divides the park along a 'use gradient' according to local resource fragility and uses deemed appropriate (Delgado, 1992; Payne, 2001). The park zoning comprises 5 management areas (Figure 3.3 and Table 3.1), each with a specific level of resource protection and allowable activities.

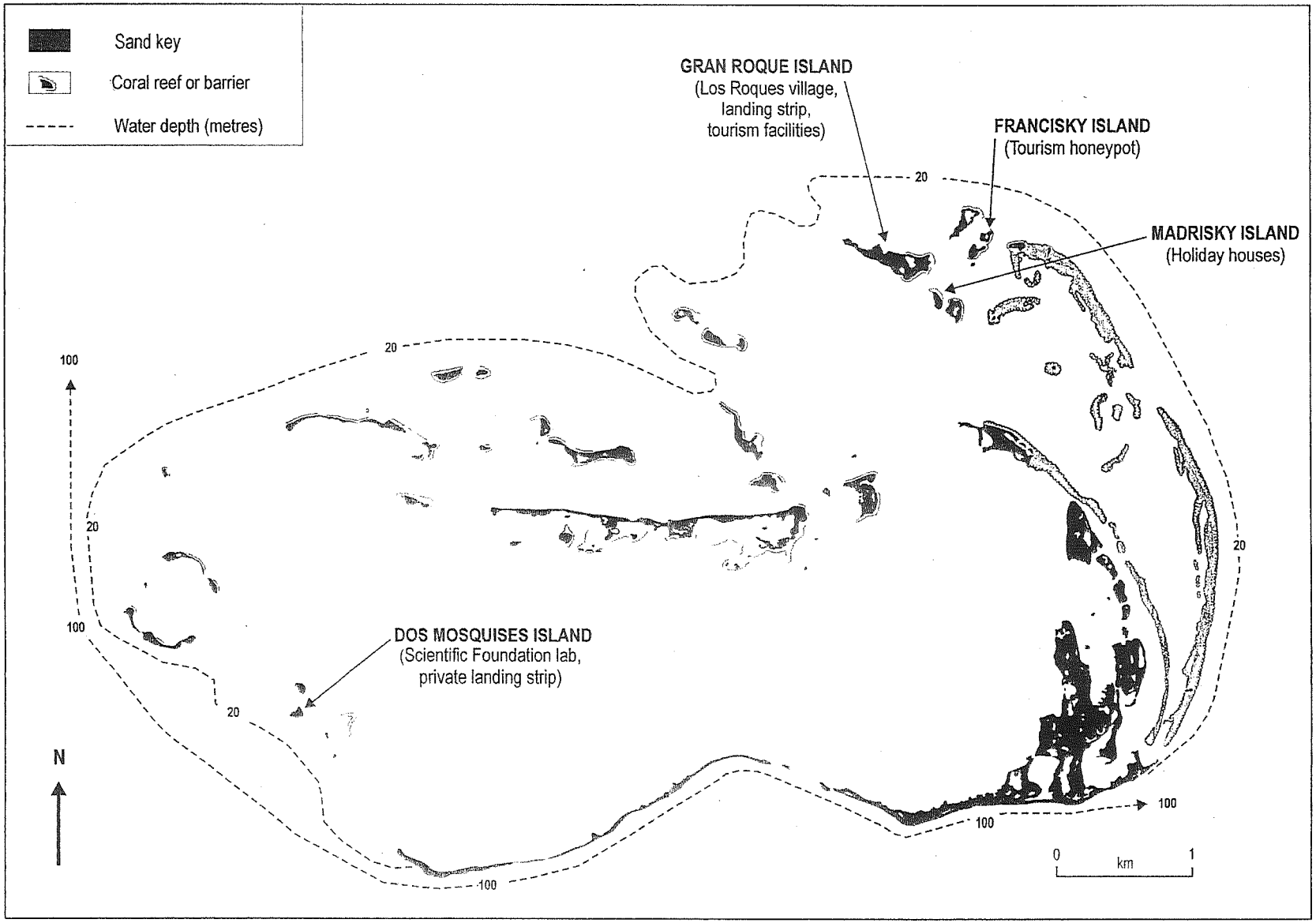

Figure 3.2: Physical Resources of the Archipelago Los Roques National Park

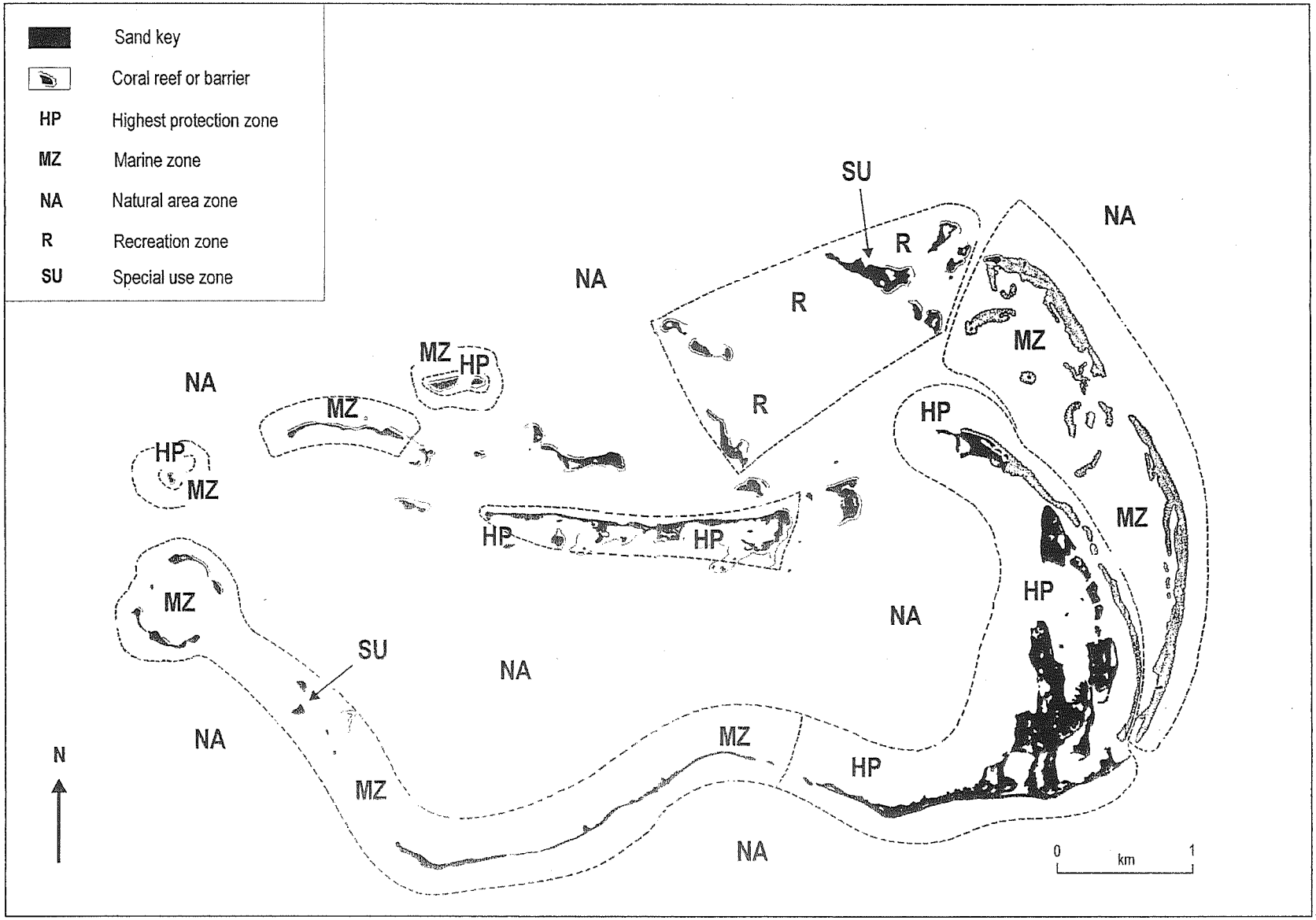

Figure 3.3: Management Zones of the Archipelago Los Roques National Park

Most tourism activities take place in the Recreation zone around Gran Roque island and on cays in the Natural Area zone, although some diving and visitor activities also take place in cays on the Marine zone under more stringent regulations (Payne, 2001). These INPARQUES regulations for cays in this area include the need to obtain a daily permit prior to a visit, the party size is limited to a maximum of 15 people, and there is a maximum daily number of people per cay. However, the number of people per cay is not controlled *in situ* by INPARQUES because the regulations apply only to commercial tour operators and it excludes visitors who go there on their own boats (Payne, 2001).

Table 3.1 Management zones of Los Roques National Park (Venezuela, 1990).

ZONE NAME	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS
Highest Protection	No activities are allowed other than research or vigilance, and no infrastructure is permitted unless for these uses and of provisional character. This zone gives the highest level of protection, and it is for areas deemed to be fragile and ecologically valuable.
Marine	Limited tourism and recreation is allowed but only for groups no larger than 15 and under restrictions established by the park's managers. Resource protection takes precedence over other uses in this area.
Natural Area	Recreation, tourism and fishing activities are allowed in this area. The construction of basic support infrastructure for tourism and vigilance is allowed. Resource protection is moderate in this zone.
Recreation	All recreational and tourism activities are allowed, along with the construction of related support infrastructure. Although resource protection is minimal in this zone, it only allows for activities that are deemed not to be harmful to the park's resources.
Special Use	This encompasses areas with significant human presence and human alterations, including Gran Roque and Dos Mosquises islands. Resource protection might not be optimal due to the specific circumstances.

The current park's management plan was approved in 1990 (Venezuela, 1990). It was developed from a zoning project started in 1986, and it includes previous proposals from 1973 and 1976 that were not then implemented. According to Delgado (1992), the design of this plan involved three stages. The first stage was a 'pre-workshop', where the zoning proposals were established and areas with potentially conflicting uses were identified. The second was a 'public consultation workshop', convened by INPARQUES, and which included parties deemed to be interested in the park and its management, with comments being invited on the previously prepared proposals. This led to the production *"**in a short time of an acceptable document** which collects the opinions of all participants"* (Delgado, 1992:151, **bold** by the author). The last

stage was a 'post-workshop', where INPARQUES drew on the comments made in the workshop about the management plan. This considered comments *"which **are deemed valid and compatible** with the Park's Law, [and] discarded those that raised situations not compatible with the park's original objectives"* (Delgado, 1992:151, **bold** by the author). The final version of the management plan was then passed to the government for approval. As highlighted in Delgado's remarks, the development of the current management plan was not participative, and stakeholder inputs were limited to a fairly tokenistic consultation, particularly so given that interviewees for this present study explained that the 'public consultation workshop' took place over only two days. The initial implementation of this management plan also appears to have been carried out in a fairly authoritarian fashion. This helps explain Degado's remark that immediately after starting to implement the management plan relationships between INPARQUES and other park stakeholders became *"immensely eroded due to conflicts between those with political interests and the technical regulations **imposed** by INPARQUES"* (1992:151, **bold** by the author). More recently it has been asserted that the lack of participation by the local community in decision-making was a serious problem for the park's management (AECI Consultant Group, 1998; Ananda, 1998; Arreaza, 1998; Asoproroque, 1999; Gutic, 1997; Ornat, 1997). The need to create participatory mechanisms has also been highlighted by several commentators, as well as more recently by the park's Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA) (AUA, 2000; AUA, 2001).

One requirement of the 1990 management plan was that plan implementation should be reviewed and revised accordingly by INPARQUES every five years. However, the review and revision process might have been affected by conflicts surrounding the park's management. A review has only taken place once, and the resulting plan modifications, which were ready in 1998, have not yet been adopted (Duran, Matani, personal communications). In Ornat's review of park management in 1997 he notes that there were fundamental disagreements between INPARQUES and CCA and that these were delaying the adoption of the revised management plan.

In sum, Los Roques National Park is a natural area of significant ecological importance and fragility, which has a recent history of both protection and tourism development. This development is being managed through a geographical zoning system which divides the park according to perceptions of the fragility and of adequate uses for each area. A management plan adopted in 1990 is the other main tool used to regulate activities in the park. Several commentators have highlighted how the plan's development and implementation was non-participative and authoritarian, and they argue that mechanisms to promote local community involvement in park management should be developed.

3.3.2. Tourism development in Los Roques National Park

Tourism developed in Los Roques relatively recently, initially slowly and later more rapidly. Drawing on Butler (1980), it is possible to suggest four or possibly five tourism development stages (modified from Amend, 1992):

- A pioneer stage during the 1940s and 1950s, when there were only a few fishermen's huts, which lacked any facilities, and visiting Los Roques was considered an adventure. This would be equivalent to Butler's 'Exploration' stage.
- A wealthy tourism stage, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, when wealthy plane and yacht owners started to visit and then persuaded the Roquenos to build a rudimentary landing strip in Gran Roque in exchange for free transportation. At this stage some private holiday homes were built on Gran Roque and on several islands in the Northeast of the park. This would equate with Butler's 'Involvement' stage.
- A sell-out stage in the early 1980s when visitors coming from the mainland or abroad started to buy houses of the Roquenos to transform them into "posadas". After having sold their properties and not having physical space to rebuild their houses, this led to a crowding of the Gran Roque urban area, and the migration of some Roquenos from the park. The tourist influx greatly increased during this stage, mostly due to an airline occasionally bringing tourists to the park. However, there was still no regular air link between the park and mainland, mostly due to opposition from the wealthy holiday-home owners. This is similar to Butler's 'Development' stage.

- A mass-tourism stage, starting in 1988 with regular daily commercial flights to the park bringing day-tour and long stay package tourists. Two airlines started regular services between the park and two destinations on the mainland (Caracas and Margarita island), and the number of companies offering flights and lodging and tour service packages has increased ever since (Gutic, 1993). The number of posadas has increased subsequently from about 20 to more than 60, along with substantial growth in the number of supporting tourism businesses. This stage might be described as a mix of 'Development' and 'Consolidation' stages.
- Possibly there is also an 'Stagnation' stage. It may be that Los Roques National Park has already reached a phase of stability or early decline, with the number of posadas having diminished slightly to 56, some businesses becoming firmly established while others have failed, and the number of visitor arrivals becoming stable. Visitor arrivals have even experienced some unexpected, but possibly temporary decline (Author's own survey and data from INPARQUES, 2001).

Tourism facilities are concentrated on Gran Roque island, which has 56 "posadas" or hotels, totalling around 1100 bed-spaces (Figure 3.4). There are also 37 businesses that partly or wholly support tourism activities in the park, including souvenir shops, cafes, restaurants, convenience stores and diving shops. Nowadays, most tourists are brought to the Park by five airline and tourism companies that also transport the bulk of tourists (INPARQUES, 2001). On a typical peak season day, there will be about 1500 visitors using Gran Roque as a service and accommodation centre (Gutic, 1993; 1996).

A more or less reliable record of international and domestic visitor numbers was started by INPARQUES in 1996 (Table 3.2). These records suggest that during the period 1996 - 1998 park visitation increased at a rate of about 10,000 additional visitors per year, growing from around 43,000 in 1996 to almost 64,000 in 1997. However, from 1999 onwards visitor numbers appear to be declining. Several interviewees for this study attributed this to factors external to the park and unrelated to tourism operations, such as the condition of the economy and a widespread perception of political instability in Venezuela.

Figure 3.4: Location of tourist accommodation and businesses in Gran Roque village
(Source: Author's survey, February 2001)

It is also possible that these figures underestimate visitor numbers, as the data is collected by a park ranger at Gran Roque airport, who is not always there, and by boat captains voluntarily reporting their arrival at the INPARQUES offices on Gran Roque island. There are indications that such under-reporting might be happening in the Central Co-ordinating Authority reports and in the Tourist Operator Association claims that 68,000 visitors came to the park in 1997 and more than 70,000 in 1999 (Asoproroque, 1999; AUA, 1998; AUA, 2000). It has been estimated that 10% of all international visitors coming to Venezuela actually visit Los Roques, thus making it the country's third most important tourist destination after Margarita island and Canaima national park (Asoproroque, 1999).

Table 3.2. Visitors to Los Roques National Park, 1996 - 2000, according to method of transportation and origin (Source: INPARQUES, 2001).

TYPE OF TRANSPORT	AIRCRAFT		YACHT		TOTAL VISITORS PER YEAR
YEAR/ORIGIN	VENEZUELAN	FOREIGN	VENEZUELAN	FOREIGN	
1996	12526	26097	1119	3657	43399
1997	20017	32608	2711	1778	57114
1998	22277	35300	2829	3372	63778
1999	20797	28366	2572	3730	55647
2000	32768	21185	3069	2470	59492

To summarise, tourism development in Los Roques has been a relatively recent phenomena. Tourism activities are concentrated in the only large populated area in the park, Gran Roque village, from which virtually all activities take place. Visitor numbers to the park are around 50 - 70,000 each year, with the latest statistics showing signs of slight decline, although collection methods might not be reliable. This decline appeared to be unrelated to the park and its tourism operations, and was likely to be caused by the country's political and economical instability.

3.4 The Management of Los Roques National Park

3.4.1. Institutional Responsibilities

During the 1930s the Los Roques archipelago, along with all islands off the North Venezuelan coast, was under the jurisdiction of the Federal

Dependencies Office, first under the Ministry of Defence and since the 40s under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. For Los Roques this organisation was solely concerned with the Gran Roque's population, and it has not intervened in natural resource management issues (Sanchez *et al.*, 1996).

Between the designation of Los Roques as a national park in 1972 and the creation of the CCA in 1990, INPARQUES was the authority with most influence in the area's management (Delgado, 1992). INPARQUES is represented in the park by a superintendent and ranger staff, who are charged with ensuring that the management plan and park regulations are complied with (Amend, 1992; Venezuela, 1990). Their responsibilities include protecting and managing the park's natural resources, management of the local community, regulating fishing activities (together with the Fishing Resources Service of the Agriculture Ministry), and dealing with infractions of regulations and with emergencies (along with the National Guard) (Gutic, 1996).

However, since the creation in 1990 of Los Roques Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA) and since implementation work began on the park's management plan, INPARQUES has been legally bound to share its management responsibilities with the CCA (Venezuela, 1990b). According to Buroz (1998:155), the Law for Territorial Organisation (Venezuela, 1983) established the rationale for Central Co-ordinating Authorities as being *"for the environmental management of those areas with particularly critical problems...where the functional complexity of implementing their specific management plans and programmes makes them necessary"*. The fact that the Venezuelan government chose this particular organisational form to implement the park's management plan suggests they expected this work to be complex and to lead to conflicts. The Los Roques CCA is a government agency specifically created for the park, in principle representing the Environment Ministry, and whose main mission is *"to direct, co-ordinate, implement and supervise the (park's) Management Plan"* (Venezuela, 1990b:49). The CCA is charged with co-ordinating the work of all other government agencies with responsibilities in the park, including those providing public utilities and services to the park's permanent population and tourists (AUA, 1996). However, instead

of facilitating the work of other institutions through its co-ordinating role, in practice the CCA has conflicting responsibilities with INPARQUES.

There are at least 10 other governmental institutions besides CCA and INPARQUES that have a role in the park. Notable among these are the National Guard (a militarised police force), the Coastguard, the Fishing Resources Service of the Agriculture Ministry (SARPA), and the Venezuelan Tourism Corporation Ministry (CORPOTURISMO), with the latter just starting to operate there when the fieldwork research was undertaken. The Ministries of Environment, Education, Health, Transport and Communications, Internal Affairs (equivalent to the UK Home Office) and Urban Development also have specific roles in the park, mostly in relation to the local population located in the village of Gran Roque. Representatives from all these institutions form the CCA's Directive Council, and they are required to meet regularly to review policies guiding the CCA's actions. The Directive Council has had a history of less than regular activity, and of being subject to the differing outlook of each Central Co-ordinating Authority Director, with meeting frequency ranging from virtually never to monthly meetings under the current Director. Two semi-autonomous institutions, for electricity and drinking water provision, are supposed to operate in the park, but in practice the CCA has assumed their functions.

The discussion has shown that the two institutions currently with the most authority in the park are INPARQUES and the Central Co-ordinating Authority (CCA), with their management roles augmented by various other government institutions.

3.4.2. Policy-making and the management of tourism and natural resources

Prior to the approval and implementation of the park's Management Plan in 1990, the powers of INPARQUES personnel were limited to those set out in the National Parks Law and the decree which designated the park. But these only gave a general outline of areas of responsibility for INPARQUES in the park, and they did not give specific objectives for resource management, public

access or for population control (Matani, personal communication). The development of policies are still carried out from the Caracas office of INPARQUES in a centralised fashion, and before the mid-1980s there was also very little interaction with personnel in the field (Gutic, 1997; Ornat, 1997). However, the development of the 1990 Management Plan implemented in 1990 did involve participation and input from field personnel.

In the past, and particularly during the 1980s, the INPARQUES personnel in the park lacked even the most elementary resources and they had a mainly token presence and this was largely limited to Gran Roque island. They performed patrol duties on rare occasions when they had petrol and their boats where in working order (Amend, 1992; Gutic, 1993). Thus, enforcement of park regulations was lax during this period, with regular infractions of resource use regulations, particularly with respect to fishing. While INPARQUES has legal powers in relation to the local population, other governmental institutions have taken a more active role, and their needs have not been given sustained attention until the creation of the Central Co-ordinating Authority (Amend, 1992). Other government institutions operating in the park have fulfilled their responsibilities only occasionally at best, either due to lack of local presence or resources, limited interest, or due to the area's isolation (Amend, 1992; Arreaza, 1998; AUA, 1996; AUA, 1997).

The approval of the park's Management Plan in 1990 meant that INPARQUES had powers for the first time in relation to the management of all park activities. The plan created specific management zones according to their natural resource characteristics and the human activities considered appropriate (Payne, 2001; Venezuela, 1990). But at the same time that this Plan was enacted, the Central Government also created the Los Roques Central Co-ordinating Authority (Venezuela, 1990b).

The CCA was established to ensure there was co-ordination between INPARQUES and the other government institutions in the park, and also to oversee the implementation of the park's Management Plan (AUA, 1996; Venezuela, 1990b). The justification given for the creation of the CCA was the

existence of inter-institutional conflicts and opposing interests in relation to the park's resources, which could have made it difficult to implement the Management Plan (AUA, 1996). While INPARQUES has the theoretical legal authority to co-ordinate the actions of all government institutions in the park, which in principle are obliged to report and agree with INPARQUES on all their activities, in practice there have been severe institutional conflicts in the park, such as institutional quarrelling over responsibilities and functions. These conflicts have resulted in duplication of effort, neglect of responsibilities, intense rivalries, as well as disorganisation and antagonism among park institutions (AUA, 1996; Delgado, 1992). The creation of the CCA has diminished the level of conflict between INPARQUES and other institutions, but it also created a new institutional conflict between the CCA and INPARQUES (Delgado, 1992). The main causes of this new conflict relate to the CCA's jurisdiction to implement management actions and, particularly after 1994, its assumption of responsibilities from other government institutions with less influence in the park.

Delgado (1992:152) argues that *"the establishment of the CCA originated a singular situation within the Venezuelan national parks system, in which for the first time another institution was assuming some of the responsibilities that have been the sole jurisdiction of INPARQUES"*. According to Delgado, these usurped responsibilities include the ability to authorise new land uses and to issue permits to carry out some activities in the park. He argues that this situation diminished the role of INPARQUES and excluded them from some of the duties that they should carry out.

During the research period the conflict between INPARQUES and CCA was being handled locally by their representatives in Los Roques having what one interviewee described as a *"gentleman's agreement"*. Nevertheless, this issue has been identified in two reports as a significant obstacle to the park's management (AECI Consultation Group, 1998; Ornat, 1997). Ornat (1997:4), concludes that it *"results in ambiguities and a legal overlapping between INPARQUES and the CCA, which leads to institutional disagreements and ill feelings"*. However, the conflict seemed to have abated over the research

period due to INPARQUES gradually loosing its decision-making authority compared with the CCA.

Turning to the park's environmental condition, this is considered to be generally good (Gutic, 1993; Gutic, 1997; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001). However, Ornat (1997:4) concludes from an assessment of the park's future management scenarios, that *"the future scenarios for Los Roques gives cause for concern...the main threat for the park's future is tourism growth"*. He regards the park's most pressing environmental problems to be the waste water and garbage generated by tourists and residents, which depending on the tourist season amount to between 1.5 to 4 tons of solid waste each day, and the intensive use of some park areas (AUA, 1996; Gutic, 1993; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001). This intensive use is leading to increasing degradation, particularly of the most fragile resources, such as the shallow coral reefs and the grassy areas subject to pedestrian traffic. Private and commercial tourist boats anchoring over the coral reefs and seaweed fields are also perceived to be a significant environmental threat (Gutic, 1993; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001).

The overuse of popular spots is considered to be a serious environmental problem by the park authorities, and measures have been introduced to restrict their use on peak days, but with no apparent success so far (Gutic, 1993; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001). Both INPARQUES and the CCA are increasingly concerned about how much more tourism growth the park can absorb (AUA, 1997b; INPARQUES, 1998; Ornat, 1997; Payne, 2001). This concern has resulted in a project to implement a rudimentary tourist "capacity limit" for a popular location in the park (Sanchez, personal communication), as well as INPARQUES and CCA proposals to monitor changes originating from human activities in the park. Both of the latter proposals are oriented to establishing some level of "adequate" park visitation, but neither of the two main management authorities have a clear plan of how this visitor level will be established or maintained (AUA, 1997b; INPARQUES, 1998).

In summary, the main powers to deal with activities in the park, and particularly with tourism, arise from the 1990 management plan. Responsibilities

for implementing this plan are split between INPARQUES and the CCA, with these institutions having most management authority in the park. Although the CCA was created to deal with the complexity of managing an area with multiple actors, in practice it has led to new conflicts between the CCA and INPARQUES. The park's current condition is generally good, although several commentators have expressed serious concern about threats originating from uncontrolled development and growth of tourism activities. Both management authorities are concerned with how much tourism growth the park can accommodate, but concrete policies or effective actions have yet to result.

3.5 Conclusion

This discussion has shown that planning in Venezuela has been affected by the country's dependence on oil revenue and by personal and political influences. It is a society where planning problems tend to persist and are entrenched by the process of political reorganisation that occurs frequently. Planning efforts often result in a series of planning proposals from successive governments, with previous policies being discontinued and new ones never being fully implemented. Natural resource management in Venezuela suffers from similar problems. Other related planning problems include constant government reorganisations, a lack of co-ordination and technical expertise among key personnel, a reactive planning style, and a lack of public participation.

It has been shown that the Venezuelan government has had only a short experience of managing tourism. This experience is even shorter in national parks, with the first management policy being proposed in 1993 as a response to increasing tourism pressure. The institution in charge of managing natural parks, INPARQUES, does not have clear goals for the public use of protected areas and past experience suggests that it does not have the capacity to manage these areas very effectively.

It was shown that Los Roques National Park has significant ecological importance but it is environmentally fragile. Tourism development in the park is

being managed using a geographical zoning system and a management plan adopted in 1990. Several commentators have emphasised that the development of this management plan was non-participative, and have argued that local community involvement in park decision-making should be increased. Visitor numbers in the park are around 50 - 70,000 per year, with these figures probably having declined recently. This decline, however, is likely to be temporary, due to the country's political and economical instability. Tourism activities are concentrated in the only large populated area of the park, Gran Roque village, from which virtually all activities take place. The two institutions with the most management authority in the park are INPARQUES and the CCA. The CCA was created to deal with the complexity of managing the multiple actors in the area, but it has led to new conflicts. While the park conditions are generally good, several commentators have expressed serious concern about threats due to the uncontrolled development of tourism activities. Both management authorities are concerned with how much tourism growth the park should accommodate, but concrete growth management policies have yet to be developed.

Chapter 4
The Conceptual Framework

4.1 Introduction

The objectives of this study include the identification and assessment of stakeholders who are affected by proposals for the management of tourism and environmental resources in a national park. A conceptual framework is required that identifies these stakeholders together with their concerns and needs in relation to park resources. This framework should also establish an analytical process to map the influence of these stakeholders in relation to the management proposals. Hence, a conceptual framework has been developed for the management of stakeholders and resources according to specified objectives. This framework links natural resource management and tourist carrying capacity issues with stakeholder analysis. The resulting framework for Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) provides guidance for the formulation of management actions intended to maintain natural resource use at acceptable levels, with these levels defined according to the perceptions of relevant stakeholders. This framework is only partially applied in this study. Its design is one of the research objectives and it constitutes one of the original contributions of the research.

Within the STREM framework, a second conceptual framework was developed to identify, assess and to consult with the stakeholders who are affected by tourism management proposals in natural areas. This Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA) assists in identifying management objectives through the use of stakeholder analysis and consultation, and thus it is a type of 'participation' technique. It was developed specifically for use in situations where there is little tradition of participative planning or where it faces significant obstacles, as is the case in many developing nations. The design and partial application of this framework constitutes another key research objective and represents another original contribution of the study.

The Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) and Stakeholder

Assessment (STA) frameworks were developed from existing literature on visitor and resource management, and on stakeholder identification, analysis and management. Both frameworks were largely developed deductively, by integrating existing literature and, in the case of the STREM framework, by integrating these two general bodies of literature. This chapter explains the characteristics and relevance of these frameworks, first discussing the STREM framework and then the STA framework. It then details the first three steps of the STA framework, explaining their relevance, theoretical background, and their characteristics, as well as how they are integrated within the STREM framework.

The main objectives of this study relate to the first three steps of the STA framework, these steps being the identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios; the assessment of management issues and stakeholder preferences for future management; and the analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence. This concentration on the first three steps strengthens the research focus and adds substantive analytical depth. The fourth step in the STA framework, that of stakeholder management, is beyond the scope of this present research for two reasons. First, stakeholder management is concerned with actions that should be taken by the decision-makers applying the framework. Thus, it is fundamentally decided according to their perceptions and preferences, and the researcher has little role in this process. Second, the implementation of this step has to be framed within the context of specific management proposals and currently there are no such management proposals for the natural area examined in this research. Further, the park authorities in the study area still lack a clear steering vision to guide their approach to tourism management. Hence, the fourth step of the STA Framework was only developed conceptually but not applied in practice in this study.

4.2 Aims and characteristics of the Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) Framework

The Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) Framework is a decision-making tool to assist managers in the management by objectives of

tourism and resources in natural areas. The main aim of the STREM framework is to manage natural resources in tourist destinations in ways that avoid their overuse by different users, and particularly by the tourism industry. To achieve this aim, it focuses on the management of the destination's resources according to the perceived needs and the views of its stakeholders, and it seeks to identify potential compromises between these views and the destination's conservation needs, with the compromises sought being those that are acceptable to the stakeholders. The STREM framework addresses this aim by collecting information from the affected stakeholders through a process of stakeholder identification, analysis and interviews. It uses interviews rather than public meetings or collaborative planning meetings. A key purpose of the interviews is to collect opinions and to evaluate preferred management options. By feeding this information into the resource management process, it is intended to manage destinations in more democratic and potentially more sustainable ways, particularly in ways that meet the needs of users and also avoid resource overuse. The STREM framework was developed based on the premise that Stakeholder Theory can assist in the identification, analysis and involvement of stakeholders affected by the management of resources in a tourist destination. Grimble and Wellard (1996:177) contend that Stakeholder Theory can be coupled with the principles of visitor management in natural areas in order to identify the stakeholders who ought to be involved in visitor management, to define the problems to be solved, and ultimately to achieve a compromise between the resource needs of the stakeholders and the conservation needs of the destination.

The STREM framework was constructed around three management issues that were built into its design. First, it acknowledges that the design and implementation of visitor management measures involve both technical and evaluative components, with the latter involving issues of perception and value judgement (Burch, 1984; Shelby and Heberlein, 1984). As highlighted in section 2.7 of Chapter 2, several commentators (Krumpe and McCool, 1997; McCool and Lime, 2001; McCool and Stankey, 2001; Moisey and McCool, 2001; Ritchie, 1998) argue that regulating access to an area must be recognised as a political, more than a scientific issue, which needs informing by science but that

ultimately has to be made in the realm of politics and values. McCool and Lime (2001) also maintain that the objectives and decisions required for such regulations must be underpinned by the values, beliefs and priorities of the stakeholders affected by them. It is argued in this study that a significant strength of the STREM framework is its integration of technical, perceptual and value judgement components in decision-making. The STREM framework integrates subjective value issues in an open, accountable way, where the perceptions and values of relevant stakeholders are researched and then incorporated in the decision-making process.

Second, the STREM framework was designed taking into account the characteristics of natural areas in developing countries, as highlighted in Chapter 3 (Few 2001; Gutic, 1993, 1997; Morah, 1996; Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Ornat, 1997; Richter, 1984; Tosun, 2000; Twyman, 2000). Notably, the STREM framework acknowledges that these areas often provide local communities with access to, and use of resources that are vital for their subsistence. If resource conservation is prioritised without due account of stakeholders' needs in those areas, it is likely that these communities would be seriously affected or disappear altogether. However, because the ecosystem health of natural areas in developing countries is essential to human livelihoods, *"their degradation has a more direct effect on well-being than in rich areas of the First World"* (Hunter, 1997:854). Thus, the use and conservation of natural areas in developing countries can be seen as a finely balanced compromise, where either end of this equation can potentially have negative consequences for local communities. Further, the design of the STREM framework takes into account the problems of stakeholder participation in developing countries, where there is a limited tradition of participation and where policy-makers tend to make decisions without consulting affected stakeholders. The STREM framework is particularly suitable for developing countries because through the use of consultative interviews it can help in identifying and assessing stakeholders in situations where, due to the prevalence of non-participative, top-down planning approaches, stakeholders are not interested in being involved in decisions or have a limited participation capacity.

Third, the STREM framework recognises that sustainability should be addressed as an adaptive paradigm (Henry and Jackson, 1996) composed of ecological, economic, social, cultural, political and managerial priorities that coexist in a delicate balance, and where *"different interpretations of sustainability may be appropriate under different circumstances"*, such as between developed and developing countries (Hunter, 1997:858). Further, the STREM framework prioritises an ethnocentric paradigm of sustainability, where the value attached to natural resources is derived from human perceptions about their usefulness, and where meeting human needs is prioritised over the conservation needs of a natural area irrespective of the consequences for humans (Henry and Jackson, 1996; Hunter, 1997; O'Riordan, 1981; Sharpley, 2000). The framework is pragmatic in recognising that in developing nations it may be necessary to give some priority to economic and social sustainability over environmental and cultural sustainability, and that the use of certain resources may be a more desirable alternative than unaltered conservation. But it accepts this only in the context where the perceptions of the range of affected stakeholders about environmental standards are given adequate consideration. Thus, the STREM framework would be located at the anthropocentric and resource use-oriented end of the continuum along which sustainable tourism arguably can be implemented (Clarke, 1997; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Holden, 2003).

The STREM framework takes an original approach that combines stakeholder theory - in particular stakeholder identification, analysis and consultation - with specific aspects of certain visitor and natural resource management frameworks. These frameworks include the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) system for wilderness planning (Stankey, Cole, Lucas, Petersen and Frissell, 1985), the Visitor Impact Management (VIM) planning framework (Graefe, Kuss, Vaske, 1990), and the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) framework (U.S. National Park Service, 1997). These frameworks were already reviewed in Section 2.2 of Chapter 2.

The STREM framework borrows from the VIM management framework the concept of resource management by objectives, with this concept based on

the idea that all management actions should be guided by previously established objectives in a steering vision for the management process. It also incorporates the selection of condition indicators and standards for the resources being managed, an idea first developed in the LAC framework but which is common to all three frameworks. The STREM framework also has some resemblance to the VERP framework in its description of prescriptive conditions for specific areas within the destination. The VERP framework describes Zones of Visitor Experience and Resource Conditions, which are concerned with delimiting zones and resources where certain amounts of use are deemed to be acceptable according to visitor perceptions. In contrast, the STREM framework emphasises the desired condition for the resources within specific geographical zones according to the perceptions of the various affected stakeholders. These zones are called Resource Condition Areas, and they place the destination's natural resources within a specific set of prescriptive or desirable conditions. The STREM framework acknowledges that the process of defining what constitutes a "desirable" condition for certain areas and resources is a subjective and value-laden process. Once such desirable conditions have been defined, the framework guides the process to establish and measure them in a more systematic and also accountable way.

A key innovation in the STREM framework is that it proposes a structured and sequential process of stakeholder identification - the STA framework - where the stakeholders themselves identify the groups and individuals who are affected by, and are relevant to, management proposals, and thus must be taken into account in decision-making. This is a radical conceptual departure from the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks, as all of them rely on the perceptions of managers to identify and decide which stakeholders have an interest in the management process. While these frameworks recognise that management proposals affect various stakeholders and thus public involvement in decision-making is desirable, the responsibility for deciding who will be involved, as well as the nature of that involvement, is largely left to the discretion of process managers. Both the LAC and VIM frameworks squarely place this responsibility on managers by noting the importance of public involvement but without giving further details of how they might achieve it in

practice (Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990; Stankey *et al.*, 1985). Only the VERP framework provides some general guidance on who to involve, suggesting that the identification of relevant stakeholders can be done through the application of geographical, economic, resource use and resource value criteria (USNPS, 1997:16-17).

Another significant difference between STREM and the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks is the way in which stakeholders' opinions and preferences are incorporated into the management process. Decision-making in the STREM framework includes a structured assessment of stakeholder perceptions of what is desirable or acceptable for the area's resources. Furthermore, these stakeholder preferences are incorporated into planning decisions through a process of comparison and potential compromise between what is desirable and what is feasible in management terms. By contrast, stakeholder input in both the LAC and VIM frameworks is based on the process manager's interpretation of stakeholder perceptions. Information on stakeholder views is gained through a review of documents or by the use of consultation processes, but the precise means to achieve these are not specified. Moreover, neither of these frameworks provide guidance on what is the scope of the issues that need to be included in management decisions, nor on which information must be provided by the stakeholders and which by the managers. Furthermore, neither of these frameworks specifies the way in which stakeholder views can be incorporated into decision-making, and as both are heavily oriented towards the management of natural resources, they provide little scope for the incorporation of issues of a political or social nature. For example, the VIM framework only suggests that public participation *may* be required when reviewing management objectives, and only indicates that *"additional research may be desirable to provide visitor input to the refinement of management objectives"* (Graefe, Kuss and Vaske, 1990:11). By contrast, in the STREM framework public involvement is guided by clear and specific steps that are explained in detail and that are intended to increase stakeholder influence on the decisions that are taken during all stages of the management process. Thus, it provides a built-in mechanism where social issues are actively sought,

as well as specific steps where these issues can be considered and incorporated into management decisions.

The VERP framework similarly delegates to process managers the responsibility for incorporating stakeholder inputs, but by comparison to LAC and VIM, it gives greater priority to understanding (although not necessarily incorporating) public values and perceptions, particularly of those stakeholders who can promote or block the management proposals. Like LAC and VIM, the VERP framework allows managers much flexibility about how they incorporate stakeholder inputs, and it does not propose a specific structured form of involvement, only suggesting that *"it may be appropriate to ask some [stakeholders] how they would like to be involved, and how often"* (USNPS, 1997:18). Importantly, stakeholder participation in all these frameworks is seen only as part of an initial data collection process, with this data then fed into the decision-making process. Further, in the LAC, VIM and VERP frameworks public input is largely sought as an additional source of information to complement ecological data and as a way to assess the accuracy and desirability of the measures previously generated by the decision-makers. By contrast, stakeholder views are central to the management process in the STREM framework. Great emphasis was given to the design of an iterative approach for the STREM framework, with parties being asked for their views at several stages of the management process. In STREM there are several opportunities for consultation with stakeholders, providing them with the possibility of making new inputs, reviewing previous ones, and modifying their views accordingly at different stages of the process. This in-built iterativeness provides greater reliability to the STREM framework and also facilitates consideration of changes in stakeholder views.

The STREM framework, and in particular its in-built framework for stakeholder identification, the STA, both involve a process of consultative participation by the stakeholders who are affected by resource uses and related management issues in tourist destinations. The term consultative participation is used here in accordance with Pretty's (1995) levels of citizen participation, as discussed in Chapter 2. Consultation is used to define the appropriate levels of

tourism resource use in natural areas. The intention is to provide managers with a fuller assessment of stakeholder views so that potentially they can be taken into account in management decisions. These decisions may be taken either by staff employed by key stakeholders in tourist destinations, or by outside advisers or consultants specifically employed to undertake this assessment, with the latter perhaps being a more advisable option, as such advisers might be seen as more independent and less aligned to the interests of any one stakeholder. While managers will still decide on the final balance between stakeholder needs and between these needs and those of the destination, this would be based on a much more thorough, informed and, hopefully, sensitive process.

The next section outlines the conceptual basis of the STREM framework, briefly explaining each step and reviewing its characteristics, required inputs and expected outputs.

4.3 Conceptual steps in the Stakeholder and Resource Management (STREM) framework

This section reviews the purpose and characteristics of each of the steps of the STREM framework. The framework's thirteen steps are presented in Figure 4.1. The complete STREM framework will not be evaluated in detail in this study, as the present focus is on the key first three steps of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA), which in turn is contained within the STREM framework. The subsequent steps of the STREM framework are intended to be carried out by the managers charged with assessing and implementing the tourist destination's specific management proposals. The STREM framework will only be fully implemented when there are specific management proposals, as indicated in the fourth step of the STA framework. The later stages of the STREM framework involve the lead managers or other specialists in assessing the conditions of specific resources in a natural destination, and the managers or decision-makers establishing their preferences for specific management proposals. The implementation of the STREM framework and the fourth step of the STA framework were thus beyond the scope of this study. Instead, this

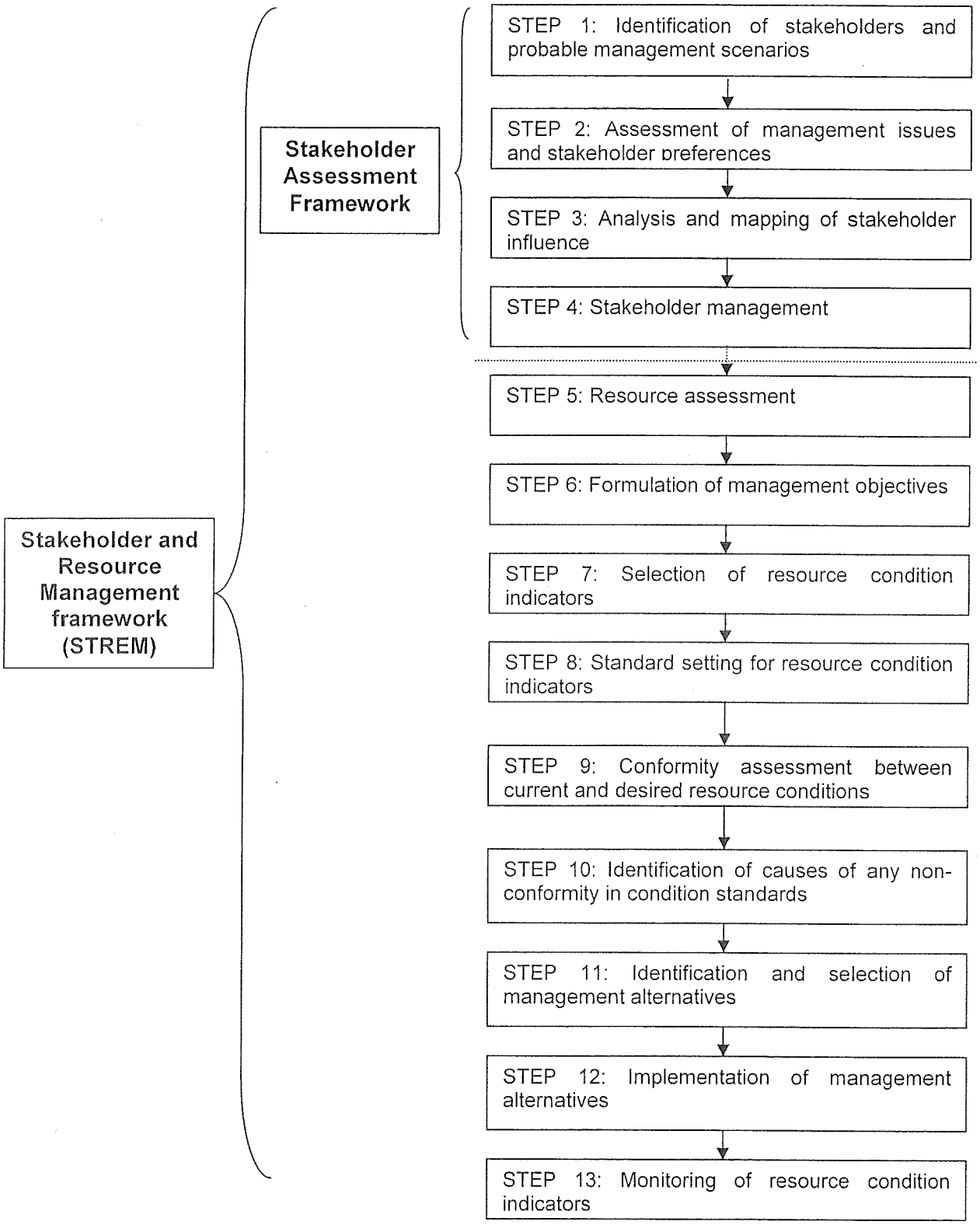

Figure 4.1

Stakeholder and Resource Management Framework (STREM)

study examines only the first three steps of the STA framework. The author adopted a role similar to a consultant working for the lead managers, and then he identified the affected stakeholders and evaluated their management preferences. It is intended that the resulting findings could be used by the lead managers involved in management decision-making.

The first four steps of the STREM framework identify the stakeholders affected by management proposals for tourism in a natural area, and they assess their resource needs and preferences. The premise is that this information can assist managers to develop management proposals with a greater chance of success and which are less likely to lead to conflict.

The STREM framework adapts the management proposals to address the views of stakeholders so that this increases their likely support, or at least diminishes their likely resistance, to the resulting management initiatives. The first four steps of the STREM framework constitute the Stakeholder Assessment (STA) Framework, which is explained in detail in the next section.

The fifth step of the STREM framework, resource assessment, seeks to establish a base line of the current state of the destination resources and of the legal and policy framework that affects its management. The resource assessment provides a reference point from which to start management actions. The sixth step, the formulation of management objectives, requires the stakeholders to articulate exactly what they are seeking to achieve through the management process. That is, what are the conditions they consider desirable for the destination, and these conditions are expressed as management objectives. The seventh step, the selection of resource condition indicators, requires that lead or process managers establish how the previously formulated management objectives and their associated desirable conditions would be measured, thus providing a way to monitor the efficiency of the management actions. The eight step, the setting of standards for the resource condition indicators, provides stakeholders with an opportunity to reach a compromise between their resource needs and the conservation needs of the destination through an explicit process, with this process encouraging them to decide what

conditions are deemed acceptable for the area's resources. Steps nine and ten assess for conformity between current and desired resource conditions and identify the causes of any non-conformity in condition standards. These two steps help to determine if the destination's conditions are acceptable and identify the reasons why they may not be so. Step 11, the selection of management alternatives, and step 12, their implementation, seek to identify and implement the specific mechanisms to achieve the desired conditions for the destination. Finally, step 13, monitoring of the condition indicators, assesses the efficiency of the management proposal in achieving its objectives.

4.4 Aims and characteristics of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA)

The Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA) is a framework for the identification and analysis of stakeholders, and it is designed to work within the broader framework of natural resource management by objectives (STREM). The STA framework assists in the identification of resource management planning objectives. It does this by identifying stakeholders relevant to a natural resource management issue and then consulting with these stakeholders through interviews. This consultation can take place at all stages in the process, and in that respect it differs from the public consultation steps of other visitor management frameworks, where consultation takes place only at the beginning or the end of the decision-making process. The application of the STA framework is intended to include those stakeholders affected by the management of tourism and natural resources in areas where a tradition of public participation does not exist, or where there are significant obstacles to this participation. Interviews are easier to conduct than many other forms of consultation, particularly in places where there is little experience of public meetings or of joint working on a steering group. The researcher or consultant conducting the interviews can also ensure that the diversity of stakeholders affected by the issues are involved in the interviewing process, and such involvement may be far less easy to secure with other consultation techniques. Thus, interviews can be an extremely effective form of stakeholder consultation in relation to tourism planning in less developed countries, where other methods

of public involvement are less likely to work. Hence, this framework facilitates the formulation and implementation of tourism and resource management proposals based on the views of various stakeholders. It also assesses the potential influence that the affected stakeholders are likely to have on the planning proposal and on its outcomes.

The main goal of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework is to facilitate the application of stakeholder analysis, consultation and management in the context of proposals for tourism and natural resource management. This goal is achieved through four more specific objectives, namely:

- To facilitate the identification of all stakeholders affected by proposals for tourism and natural resource management.
- To identify the needs, interests and preferences of the stakeholders relevant to the management proposals, particularly in relation to the area's natural resources.
- To assess and classify the potential influence of each stakeholder in relation to the management proposals, using a stakeholder influence map.
- To develop management decisions that incorporate the identified stakeholder needs, interests and preferences and to achieve a compromise between them and the destination's conservation needs as perceived by the stakeholders.

This research partially evaluates the STA framework by examining the case of Archipelago Los Roques National Park, thus relating the framework to a specific resource management situation and its related stakeholders. All the objectives proposed for this research are included within the first three steps of the STA framework (identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios; assessment of management issues and stakeholders preferences; analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence). The STA framework constitutes the first four steps of the STREM framework, but the fourth step of stakeholder management is not discussed at length as it is not central to the study objectives.

4.5 Conceptual steps in the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA)

The Stakeholder Assessment Framework consists of four separate but interconnected steps, which guide the identification, assessment and management of the stakeholders affected by proposals for tourism and resource management. These steps have been labelled here as: 1) identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios; 2) assessment of management issues and stakeholders preferences; 3) analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence; and 4) stakeholder management. The discussion here considers the conceptual background to the first three of these steps, and it also reviews the goals, required inputs and expected outcomes for each of them. Figure 4.2 summarises the four steps of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework.

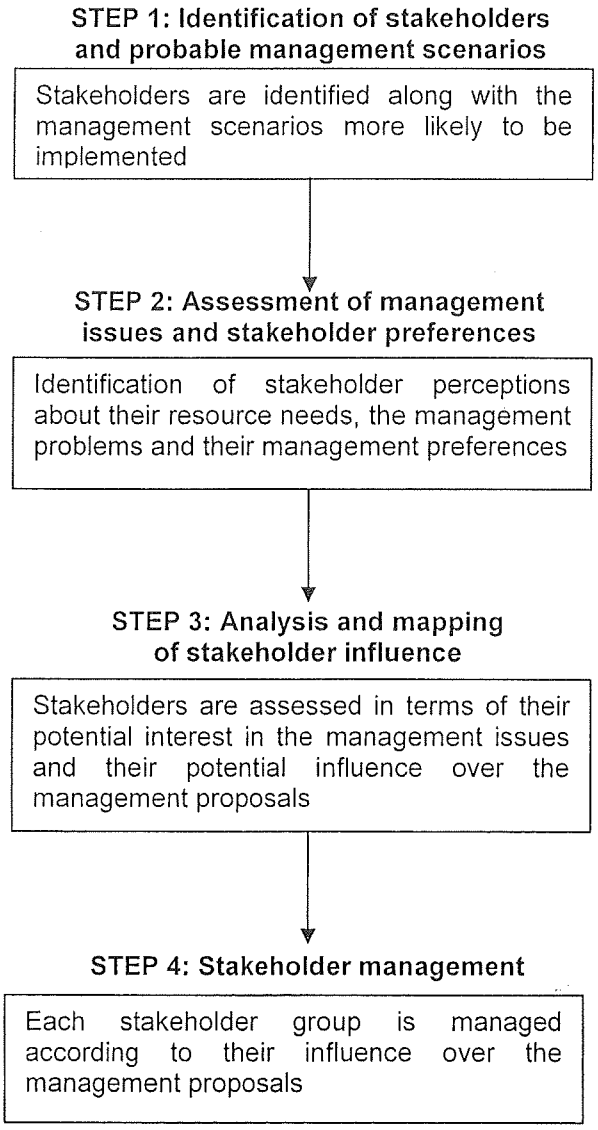

Figure 4.2: Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA).

4.5.1. STEP 1: identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios

This step identifies an initial or core group of stakeholders affected by the management of tourism and natural resources in a destination, who then in turn identify other relevant stakeholders. The identification of additional stakeholders is done through the use of a modified "rolling snowball" technique (Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Finn, 1996; Rowley, 1997). In this process, all stakeholders initially identified by the researcher are asked to name additional relevant stakeholders, who are then interviewed. This step also helps to identify the management scenarios that are most likely to be implemented in the destination, which are then used as a reference to compare the preferred management options of stakeholders. The end goal of this step is to identify the stakeholders affected by management proposals and also the management scenarios that are most likely to be implemented.

There are several arguments for involving the stakeholders affected by management proposals for tourism and natural resource management. According to Gray (1989), involving stakeholders in decision-making increases the opportunities for possible solutions and also the available resources to deal with a common problem. It can also help to eliminate or reduce the conflicts surrounding the problem if it promotes agreement about shared rules to deal with them. Further, several commentators contend that when problems are large or complex, or their solution is out of the reach of any single entity, then defining and resolving the problem can be difficult due to the complexity of ensuring that all relevant actors are involved (Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Finn, 1996). This is often the case for resource overuse issues and resource management proposals in tourist destinations. In order to achieve a clear definition of the problem and to involve all the necessary actors, Finn (1996) suggests identifying stakeholders using a "snowballing" process as an initial step toward then involving them in the problem solving process. Rowley (1997) also proposes the use of a snowball process to identify stakeholder networks and to decide which stakeholders to include in decision-making. This study uses an adaptation of Rowley's proposals for stakeholder identification, as his proposals could be easily coupled with additional criteria for the determination

of a stakeholder network boundary.

When carrying out a snowballing process it may be difficult to decide where to set the limit to halt the stakeholder identification process. Rowley proposes the use of three criteria developed by Knoke (1994, cited by Rowley, 1997:105) to define a stakeholder network boundary, and hence to decide who should be considered a stakeholder. These three criteria are: (1) specific actor attributes, (2) the types of relationships under study, and (3) the central issue or event providing the study setting. The third criterion determines the stakeholders by their relation to a particular event or issue which brings them together, and this criterion is used in the STA framework to define the stakeholder network limits and hence which stakeholders to include. The central issue or event defining the stakeholders in this research is the modification of the management of tourism and natural resources in a natural destination.

This step of the STA framework was initiated by reviewing previous management documents, workshop proceedings, lists of permit holders and registered users, and census information from related administrative authorities. Additionally, interviews were then carried out in order to identify other stakeholders through snowballing. The typical respondents selected for these interviews were area managers, elected officials with authority over the resources, managers of companies using the resources and group representatives with interests in the area. The representatives of institutions with most management authority in the area were also interviewed to identify likely management scenarios. On completion, this step resulted in a list of stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management proposals for the natural area, along with the management scenarios most likely to be implemented.

The implementation of this step has three distinct stages: first, the review of information and initial identification of stakeholders; second, the identification of likely management scenarios; and third, the implementation of a snowballing process for stakeholder identification. The criteria employed to implement each of these stages are now explained, as well as how these criteria relate to the

goals of this step and of the STA framework. The initial identification of stakeholders requires a review of existing management documentation to identify potential stakeholder groups and also the gatekeepers and key actors within them who can help to identify other possible stakeholders using the snowballing process. This stage uses criteria **A1** for stakeholder identification and criteria **A2** for key actor or gatekeeper identification, and these criteria are explained in Table 4.1. During this step's second stage, the gatekeepers who are familiar with the destination's management and resource conditions are interviewed to identify likely management objectives and scenarios. These individuals are identified through the use of criteria **A3** for decision-maker identification (Table 4.1).

After identifying a core stakeholder group, the third stage of this step then proceeds to identify other affected stakeholders using a "rolling snowball" interview, by asking these core stakeholders to identify other actors who are linked to them by specific types of relationships, as set out in criteria **A4**. If further stakeholders are identified during the interviews, these new stakeholders are in turn interviewed until few new actors are nominated, resulting in the construction of a network of relevant stakeholders based on the perceptions of its members. The nominated stakeholders are then screened with criteria **A1** for stakeholder identification and criteria **A5** for stakeholder network boundary delimitation. The snowballing is considered complete when any new nominated actors are screened out by criteria **A5**, and it is then assumed that all stakeholders to the management proposals have been identified. All stakeholders identified at the end of this step are classified as direct or indirect resource users according to the resource dependence criteria **A6**. Criteria **A4**, **A5** and **A6** are presented in Table 4.1.

With the completion of the STA framework's first step it is assumed that all stakeholders affected by the destination's management proposals have been identified and classified according to their degree of resource dependence. The data produced in this step is then fed into the STA framework second step, the assessment of management issues and stakeholder preferences.

Table 4.1. Criteria used in step 1 of the STA framework (identification of stakeholders and likely management scenarios).

CRITERIA	PURPOSE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITERIA
A1	Criteria for stakeholder group identification (any one or more of the following criteria): • They currently use the resources. • They have authority or legal rights over the resources. • They regulate access to the resources. • They currently derive a benefit (monetary, material or otherwise) from the resources. • They are affected by the use of the resources or any change in its management. • They have a perceived or expressed right or interest in the resources or the activities associated with them (civil groups, NGOs, scientific institutions).
A2	Criteria for identification of gatekeepers or key actors in each stakeholder group (any one or more of the following criteria): • Is an elected official or recognised representative of a user group. • Is the top managing figure of an institution with a mandate or legal right over the resources. • Is the person who sets, distributes or organises access quotas to the resources. • Is a representative of a group with a perceived or expressed right or interest in the resources. • Is the manager or representative of a company whose income depends partly or fully on using the resources, either directly or indirectly.
A3	Criteria for the identification of key decision-makers that can help identify likely management scenarios (any one or more of the following criteria): • The informant's organisation has a legal mandate over the destination's resources and has used it actively. • The informant's organisation has had a leading role in any planning or decision-making concerning the destination resources. • The informant is a key advisor for an organisation that has a leading role in planning or decision making for the destination.
A4	Criteria for identifying other stakeholders who are related to the previously identified stakeholders. These are groups with whom the previously identified stakeholders are related, and who are affected by the use of the resources or any change in its management, and meet any one or more of the following criteria: • They depend on goods or services provided by the other stakeholders, or produce goods or services that are mostly consumed by these stakeholders. • They create legal or operational constraints on these stakeholders. • They exchange information with these stakeholders. • They have interacted, or are in alliance with these stakeholders to tackle a problem. (For the purposes of A4, a person or group will be defined as being affected by the use of the resources or any change in its management if they meet any of the criteria A1 for stakeholder identification).
A5	Criteria for delimiting the stakeholder network boundary (any one or more of the following criteria): • The stakeholder is an end-of-chain stakeholder, that is, its links have already been mentioned by other previously interviewed stakeholders, thus implying that the interviewee is the last stakeholder in that particular link (modified from Rowley, 1997). • The stakeholder is not affected by the use of the resources or any change in its management.
A6	Criteria for determining direct and indirect resource users, this being a classification of resource dependency: • Direct users are those whose functioning, operations or well-being depend on, or is directly generated by, resource use. • Indirect users are those whose functioning, operations or well-being depend on a third-party who is a direct resource user.

4.5.2. STEP 2: assessment of management issues and stakeholder preferences

This step assesses the perceived resource needs and preferred management options of each stakeholder group. This necessitates three distinct

stages, the first being to determine the relevant stakeholders' perceptions about which destination resources are valuable *per se* and which are being used by tourism. The second stage establishes stakeholder perceptions of the effects of tourism on the area's resources and what problems exist in relation to their management. In the third stage, stakeholder management preferences are elicited.

The stakeholders' perception about which destination resources are valued and used by tourism is required because managers clearly need to identify these resources before determining what constitutes an appropriate use for them. Trist (1983, cited by Gray, 1989) contends that decision-taking processes in resource management require that it is the stakeholders of the problem domain who define what constitutes the problem or issue to be solved. The STA framework provides stakeholders with an opportunity to determine which resources are important and should be managed. Further, it also provides an opportunity for the problem domain to be defined at the beginning of the process in a sufficiently broad way that it might accommodate the various interests and preferences of the diverse stakeholders (Gray, 1989; Gregory and Keeney, 1994).

In order to determine which are the valued resources in a destination, the STA framework builds on the concept of environmental capital (CAG Consultants, 1997), by conveying the concept of the environment as a collection of assets that can provide a continuous and sustainable flow of benefit or services for human well-being. The environmental capital approach assesses the services that natural or environmental resources can provide based on human perceptions, as distinct form an approach that evaluates resources in terms of them having some innate or inherent value independent of human perceptions. This approach attempts to establish which characteristics or attributes of a place matter in terms of human perceptions of sustainability. It asks how important these place attributes or resources are thought to be, to whom and why, how they might be replaced or substituted, and how much of those attributes should be available in the future. The analytic criteria developed for this step builds on the concept of environmental capital (CAG Consultants, 1997) and shares its technocentric approach (Henry and Jackson, 1996;

Sharpley, 2000), as in the STA framework the resources of a natural area are valued according to the perception of the stakeholders, most of which are also the area's resource users. However, instead of looking for a single, manager-led, definition of which destination resources are valued and should be preserved, the STA framework uses the objectives and values of the various stakeholders to guide the formulation of the preferred management scenarios. This builds on the approach suggested by Gregory and Keeney (1994), as stakeholders are consulted in order to identify their various values and preferences, and these are used to establish the planning options for decision-making. This step also accords with Ritchie's (1998) assertion that all stakeholders' views about valued resources have validity as they are based on their individual value systems.

This step is implemented by interviewing relevant stakeholders previously established in the first step of the STA framework. Each stakeholder is asked to identify the destination's resources, which resources are being used and affected by tourism, which are the tourism-related issues and problems to be solved, what are their own resource needs, and what are their preferred management options. There are several outputs of this step, the first being a list of the destination's attributes that are perceived as valuable or important by the stakeholders, as well as information about which of these attributes are being used and affected by tourism. This step also identifies stakeholder perceptions concerning the issues or problems arising from tourism's use of the area's resources, as well as views on their own resource needs. Finally, this step also identifies the preferred management options or scenarios for the destination. The criteria used to establish this information are now detailed.

Using criteria **B1** to **B4** as guidance (Table 4.2), each stakeholder is asked to identify the destination resources considered valuable and those used by tourism, along with the problems related to their use. The stakeholders' resources needs are also identified. The destination's resources are identified with criteria **B1**, the resources used by tourism with criteria **B2**, the resource management problems with criteria **B3**, and the stakeholders' resource needs are identified with criteria **B4** (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Criteria used in step 2 of the STA framework (assessment of management issues and stakeholders' preferences).

CRITERIA	PURPOSE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITERIA
B1	Criteria for resource identification: • The perceived importance and value of the destination. • The physical, biological and social attributes that contribute to the destination's perceived importance and value. • The perceived importance and value of the destination's physical, biological and social attributes. • Assessment of the reasons why stakeholders perceive these attributes as important or valuable.
B2	Criteria for identification of resources used or affected by tourism activity: • The perceived importance and value of the destination for tourism. • The physical, biological and social attributes that contribute to the perceived importance of the destination for tourism. • The perceived importance and value of the destination's physical, biological and social attributes for tourism. • Attributes perceived as being used or affected by tourism.
B3	Criteria for the identification of issues or problems related to resource use or the effects of tourism: • The perceived conflicts between tourism and the perceived importance and value of the destination. • The perceived conflicts between the conservation of destination attributes and their current use, including the effects of tourism. • The perceived conflicts between tourism and other activities using or affecting the destination attributes. • The resource management problems as perceived by the stakeholder.
B4	Criteria for the identification of stakeholder resource needs: • The perceived advantages and benefits for stakeholders of the current resource use situation. • The perceived disadvantages and costs for stakeholders of the current resource use situation. • Stakeholder patterns of access to the resources (e.g. timing, seasonality). • Stakeholder access to alternative resources. • Stakeholder ability to accommodate change in their resource access and use. • Local and regional availability of resources used by stakeholders.
B5	Criteria for the identification of stakeholders' preferences on resource management: • Stakeholder perceptions of what constitutes an undesirable or adverse management situation. • Stakeholder formulation of preferred management scenarios, based on their objectives and values. • Perceived conflicts between the destination's likely management scenario and the stakeholder's preferred management scenario.

Criteria **B5** (Table 4.2) is used to identify the stakeholders' preferred management options, as well as any potential conflict between these preferences and the likely management scenarios obtained in the previous step. The application of these criteria helps to identify stakeholders' perceptions about resources, tourism-related problems and associated trade-offs, resource needs and preferred management options.

The information generated in this step constitutes a vital input for the third step of the STA framework, where stakeholders' preferences are analysed and mapped. This information is critical to define what constitutes a stake in the

resource management proposal and the problems or issues to be addressed. Part of the information generated in this step, on resource dependence and needs, is also required to assess the stakeholders' legitimacy, a key component of the next step. The information about resource needs and preferred management options is also an essential input for the generation of resource and stakeholder management measures.

4.5.3. Step 3: analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence

This step provides an assessment of the attributes of previously identified stakeholders, and assists in developing a matrix of their potential interest and influence over the destination's management proposals. Each stakeholder group identified in Step 1 is assessed in terms of three attributes: their 1) legitimacy; 2) the urgency of their claims in relation to the destination resources, and 3), their power to influence the management proposals. Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) argue that legitimacy and power constitute the core attributes of the stakeholder identification process, but they see these as complementary or intersecting attributes. They suggest that urgency, defined as the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention, should also be accounted for when identifying stakeholders. Hence, they suggest that a stakeholder can only be classified as such after its legitimacy, power and urgency attributes have been analysed. These three criteria are adopted for stakeholder analysis in the present framework. Table 4.3 summarises the specific criteria used in this research for stakeholder analysis.

Table 4.3. Criteria used for stakeholder analysis in this research.

LEGITIMACY	Generalised perception or assumption that the actions of a stakeholder are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions.
POWER	The ability of a given stakeholder to bring about the outcomes it desires, even with the opposition of other stakeholders.
URGENCY	The degree to which a stakeholder's claims call for immediate attention.

The STA framework applies the concept of legitimacy as used by Suchman (1995, cited by Lawrence, Wickings and Phillips, 1997), who defines

this stakeholder attribute as the appropriacy or desirability of the actions of an individual within a socially constructed system of norms or values. Mitchell, Agle and Wood's (1997) definition of power is also used in this framework. It is considered to be the ability of an actor who possesses this power to bring about the outcomes it desires, or the ability to get another actor to do something that otherwise it would not do. For the purposes of the STA framework, legitimacy is considered to be the dominant or most influential attribute, followed by power. This decision is based on the argument that stakeholder analysis should lead to the empowerment of its participants, particularly those with low power and high legitimacy. This position corresponds with the views of Mark and Shotland (1985). However, the competing and overlapping nature of these two attributes is acknowledged.

In order to produce a stakeholder analysis matrix, the STA framework uses a modified version of the stakeholder classification suggested by Finn (1996) and Eden (1996), where stakeholders are classified according to the importance of their stake and their interest in the issue. Finn (1996) suggests a graphic process to visualise the stakeholders' potential influence, based on concentric circles and lines of influence, which result in an "influence map". Eden (1996) also uses interest and power criteria to assess the characteristics of a stakeholder related to its potential attitudes on an issue. The purpose of his analysis is to identify those actors who can support or sabotage a strategic intent, and then to identify the strategic options that arise for managing the issue in relation to the anticipated stakeholder dynamics.

The STA framework builds on proposals by Eden (1996) and Finn (1996) to produce a stakeholder influence and interest matrix, as this provides a meaningful categorisation of stakeholders affected by resource management proposals. The matrix proposed in the STA framework uses stakeholder attributes and their relationships with the destination resources as indicators of the stakeholders' interest in, and influence on the management proposals for the area. In turn, this matrix can be used to design management measures directed at individual stakeholder groups, according to their potential influence and interest over the management proposals. It can also be used as an

empowerment tool with those stakeholder groups with high legitimacy but who, on their own, lack the power to influence management proposals. This empowerment can take the form of selective analysis, targeting, capacity building or selective involvement of less powerful groups.

The main input for this step is a list of stakeholders affected by the tourism and resource management proposals, classified according to their level of resource use and the number of stakeholder attributes that they meet. This step provides two significant results, the first being an assessment of the stakeholders' legitimacy, urgency and power attributes, along with their relationships with the resources and other stakeholders. The second product is a stakeholder influence map, which describes each stakeholder's position within a matrix of interest and potential influence. This step uses specific criteria for the assessment of the stakeholder attributes of legitimacy, power and urgency, for the classification of all stakeholders according to their interest and influence, and for their positioning in an interest and influence matrix. Details are now provided of these criteria, and of how they relate both to the specific goal of this step and to the STA framework.

The attributes of each stakeholder are assessed according to criteria **C1**, **C2** and **C3** for legitimacy, urgency and power (Table 4.4). These criteria assess how each stakeholder relates to the destination's resources and other stakeholders, as well as how much they depend on those resources and other stakeholders. The criteria **C4** for the assessment of stakeholder interest relates to whether a stakeholder's claim has significant urgency or whether the stakeholder is a direct resource user, thus assessing the stakeholder's degree of interest in the management of a natural area (Table 4.4). The characteristics of direct resource use and urgency were chosen as the two indicators of stakeholder interest because the urgency attribute is usually linked to a high degree of dependency on the area's resources, and this characteristic makes stakeholders more dependent and vulnerable to any change in the resources or their management.

Table 4.4. Criteria used in step 3 of the STA framework (analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence).

CRITERIA	PURPOSE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITERIA
C1	Criteria for assessment of stakeholder legitimacy: • The stakeholder is currently using the resources. • The stakeholder has a long history or tradition of resource use. • The stakeholder use is accepted in current managerial, legal or cultural resource use practises. • The stakeholder has legal rights to the resources, even if it does not currently enforce them. • The stakeholder currently derives a benefit from the resources (monetary, material or otherwise). • The stakeholder has a perceived or expressed interest in the resources, or activities associated with them (civil groups, NGOs, scientific institutions).
C2	Criteria for assessment of stakeholder urgency: • It is difficult for the stakeholder to accommodate changes in resource access and use. • It is difficult for the stakeholder to access alternative resources. • The stakeholder depends on specific resources with limited local and regional availability. • The stakeholder is highly dependent on the resources during a particular time or season. • The stakeholder's livelihood or functions will be rapidly and negatively affected if the current resource use patterns are not modified.
C3	Criteria for assessment of stakeholder power: • The stakeholder has legal control of the resources, even if it does not enforce this control. • The stakeholder has in the past set access or use quotas for the resources, or currently does so. • The absence or behaviour of this particular stakeholder affects the livelihood or well-being of other stakeholders. • The stakeholder has been or is involved in an aspect of resource management (consultation, decision-taking, overseeing or regulation). • The stakeholder potentially could affect the resource access and use of other stakeholders by legal, indirect or coercive means. • The stakeholder has ignored or sabotaged management measures in the past, or threatens to do so. • The stakeholder has influenced legislation or resource use patterns in a way that gives them privileges over other stakeholders, or potentially can do so. • The stakeholder has encouraged other stakeholders to support its claims, or is capable of doing so. • Other stakeholders perceive a particular stakeholder as powerful, or non-accountable in its actions or behaviour.
C4	Criteria for assessment of stakeholder interest: • A stakeholder is considered to have high interest if it meets at least one urgency attribute or is a direct resource user. • A stakeholder is considered to have low interest if it does not meet any urgency attribute and is an indirect resource user.
C5	Criteria for assessment of stakeholder influence: • A stakeholder is considered to have high influence if it meets more than 3 power attributes and more than 3 legitimacy attributes. • A stakeholder is considered to have low influence if it meets 3 or less power attributes or 3 or less legitimacy attributes.

Criteria **C5** (Table 4.4) identifies stakeholder influence by linking it to the possession of legitimacy and power attributes. For a stakeholder to be considered capable of influencing the management of a natural area and its resources, then it needs to meet more than three power and legitimacy criteria. The attribute of legitimacy was chosen as indicative of potential influence over a

management proposal because it includes the legal right of a stakeholder to use the area's resources or to participate in its management. The fact that an area's legal framework grants stakeholders the ability to participate in their management is likely to give them the ability to influence its decision-making processes. Likewise, the stakeholder attribute of power describes a stakeholder's ability to participate in, and to influence the management process, even if such participation is not recognised by the legal framework regulating the natural area. For the purpose of this study, a cut-off level of three power and legitimacy criteria was arbitrarily chosen before a stakeholder was considered to be influential. The reason for its selection was simply that it is half the total number of six legitimacy criteria that any given stakeholder potentially can meet. In the opinion of the researcher, a stakeholder meeting a minimum of three legitimacy and three power criteria is likely to have the capacity to influence the management processes of a natural area. The capacity of a stakeholder to influence these processes relates to their power attributes, that is according to the stakeholder's political or economic impact on decision-making processes; or in the case of their legitimacy, by the stakeholder's legal influence on an area's management, as granted by the area's regulations.

In order to assess each stakeholder's potential influence on the management process, a matrix of potential influence and interest was developed according to criterion **C6** (Table 4.5 and Figure 4.3). For the practical purposes of applying the matrix, a high interest stakeholder was defined as having a high stake in the management of the area. In practice, high interest stakeholders perceive themselves as open either to gain or loose important economic, political or social assets, or else perceive their well-being to be at risk as a consequence of the management proposals. In contrast, low interest stakeholders do not perceive themselves or their well-being to be at risk because of the management proposals or their consequences. In turn, a high influence stakeholder was defined as one that has enough power and legitimacy to affect the formulation and implementation of an area's management proposals, either by supporting or opposing the plan and its intended goals. Conversely, a low influence stakeholder would lack both the power and the legitimacy to have an effect over the management proposals for

an area. Criteria **C6** thus classifies stakeholders into four possible categories, these being A) participant-active; B) participant-dependent; C) non-participant-passive; and D) non-participant active. These categories, modified from Eden's (1996) stakeholder classification, name those stakeholders with high interest as participants, and those with high influence as active. Those stakeholders with low interest are denominated non-participants and those with low influence are referred as either dependent, if they have high interest, or passive if they have low interest. These categories can be represented in a modified version of Eden's matrix of stakeholder collaboration, which is presented in Figure 4.3. below.

Table 4.5. Criteria C6 for stakeholder classification in an interest and influence matrix (Modified from Eden, 1996).

STAKEHOLDER INTEREST AND INFLUENCE CATEGORY	CATEGORY CHARACTERISTICS
Participant-dependent	Stakeholder with high interest but low influence
Participant-active	Stakeholder with high interest and high influence
Non participant-passive	Stakeholder with low interest and low influence
Non participant-active	Stakeholder with low interest but high influence

Figure 4.3. Interest and influence matrix for stakeholder classification within the STA framework.

HIGH INTEREST	PARTICIPANT-DEPENDENT	PARTICIPANT-ACTIVE
LOW INTEREST	NON PARTICIPANT-PASSIVE	NON PARTICIPANT-ACTIVE
	LOW INFLUENCE	**HIGH INFLUENCE**

At the end of this step all relevant stakeholders are assessed in terms of their attributes and potential influence on the destination's management proposals. The description of stakeholder characteristics produced in this step is a critical input for the design of resource and stakeholder management measures.

4.5.4. STEP 4: stakeholder management

The fourth step of the STA framework, stakeholder management, consists of the design by managers of stakeholder and resource management strategies for a tourist destination. In this step, both the stakeholders' management preferences and the area's management proposals are integrated to achieve a compromise between the needs of the area and those of the stakeholders. Although this step was conceptually developed in the STA framework, its methodological development is considered to be outside the scope of this study, as it should be carried out by the decision-makers applying the framework. For this reason this step is not examined here. However, an outline of its design is provided in order to help the reader in placing the framework for stakeholder assessment (the STA framework) into the wider framework for resource management (the STREM framework).

The aim of this step is to establish a set of management objectives and measures to be applied in the destination in order to avoid the overuse of its resources by tourism, whilst also producing the least adverse consequences for the stakeholders. A related goal is to generate alternative management approaches that could help to enlist maximum stakeholder support or at least to reduce their opposition to the management proposals.

The design of this step assumes that the destination's management proposals are to be directed toward the sustainable use of resources by tourism, or at least toward reduced resource over-use, in a way that will maximise stakeholder support. It is assumed that this support is most likely to be gained by proposing management options that, according to the perception of the stakeholders themselves, are intended to maximise benefits and minimise adverse consequences. However, differing management alternatives can still be generated to achieve those goals and these may gain differing degrees of stakeholder support or opposition. This step proposes a strategy for the identification of resource and stakeholder management alternatives that resembles the approach suggested by Harrison and St. John (1994), in which the current management situation is compared with the proposed management options. This comparison assesses which of the stakeholders' resource needs

and management preferences are currently being met, and which needs and preferences could be meet by the new, more sustainable, management proposals. Then, strategies and options are devised that will help in meeting the stakeholders' unsatisfied needs and preferences, while those management aspects that enable stakeholders to satisfy their current resource needs are revised and strengthened.

Ideally the management options generated in this step of the STA framework should avoid adverse consequences for the destination's resources, ensure the continuation of most stakeholder activities and solve perceived problems. However, the STREM framework, and indeed this step of the STA framework, is fundamentally manager-led. Although there are numerous consultation inputs by the stakeholders during the application of the framework, the overall management emphasis of both the STA and STREM frameworks is directed toward the promotion of sustainable resource use, and there must be recognition that this priority may override individual stakeholder preferences. This step also proposes the generation of stakeholder management measures in order to increase stakeholder support and reduce their opposition to the management proposals, using an approach similar to that of Nutt and Backoff's stakeholder management strategies (1982, cited by Bryson and Crosby, 1992).

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has developed a conceptual framework for the identification of stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management proposals, and for the assessment of their needs and preferences in relation to the destination's resources. In addition, this framework establishes a process to analyse, classify and map the influence of these stakeholders in relation to the management proposals. The design of this conceptual framework combines natural resource management and visitor management issues with stakeholder analysis. The resulting STREM framework provides guidance on the formulation of management actions directed at maintaining natural resource use at acceptable levels, with these levels defined according to the perceptions of relevant stakeholders.

Within the STREM framework, a second related conceptual framework was developed to identify and assess the stakeholders affected by the tourism and resource management proposals. This Stakeholder Assessment (STA) framework uses stakeholder identification and analysis as its primary mechanism to identify the stakeholders relevant to the management proposals for a natural area and it includes their concerns in the design of the management objectives for the area. The approach used in the STA framework for the identification and analysis of stakeholders is a radical departure from the public involvement strategies used in other visitor planning and management frameworks. Both the STREM and STA frameworks were developed deductively by integrating existing literature on carrying capacity, resource management and stakeholder identification, analysis and management.

It is thought that the frameworks will have practical value for stakeholders with an interest in tourism planning and natural resource management in natural areas, such as Los Roques National Park. They should also have particular relevance for other tourism areas in developing countries where consultation and collaboration is limited and where attention needs to focus on developing the conditions to encourage these processes. The STA framework is intended to be of particular value for planners who want to identify the stakeholders affected by a planning issue and their views of that issue, and to take into consideration those views in the planning process. Table 4.6 summarises the main characteristics of the STREM framework, as well as the related processes of public participation in the decision-making process.

Table 4.6. Overview of the main characteristics of the STREM framework.

OBJECTIVE	• To manage natural destinations in ways that meet the needs of users and that are more likely to avoid resource overuse by focusing management on the views and needs of destination stakeholders. It does this by seeking compromises between the stakeholders' views and the conservation needs of the destination in ways that are acceptable to the stakeholders.
MAIN FEATURES	• It provides a structured process of stakeholder identification, where the stakeholders themselves identify the parties that are affected by the proposals for management in the natural area. • It increases consideration of stakeholders' views in decision-making in places with limited potential for participation, such as in less developed countries.
GOALS OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	• It identifies the stakeholders affected by proposals for the management of the natural area. • It identifies the resource needs and management preferences of the relevant stakeholders. • It incorporates stakeholder needs and preferences in the decision-making processes.
MAIN FEATURES OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	• Depending on the approach taken by the process managers, it can range from non-binding consultation to functional participation, with decisions validated with the affected stakeholders. • A process of stakeholder identification, analysis and interviews replaces the less structured forms of consultation used in similar approaches.
MECHANISM TO IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS	• Stakeholders are identified through a structured process of snowballing, with this involving interviews and with the interviewees deciding which stakeholders are relevant for the management process.
MECHANISM TO INCORPORATE STAKEHOLDER INPUTS IN DECISION-MAKING	• Interviews are used to identify the resource needs of stakeholders and to evaluate their preferred management options. • Resource needs and management preferences are compared with the feasible management options, and a compromise is sought between them.
DRAWBACKS OF THE PROPOSED STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	• It is manager-led. • Managers own the information and processes.

Chapter 5
Research Methods

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the methodology developed and implemented for this research. It starts with a general perspective on the adequacy and suitability of the different methodologies available in tourism research, particularly in relation to qualitative methods, and it then reviews the specific methods employed in this research. The subsequent section discusses the application of case study methodology, with specific reference to the selection of the study area, this being the Los Roques National Park. Then there is a review of the use of in-depth interviews as the primary research instrument. Consideration is then given to the sampling framework used in this research, with the application of the snowball interview technique being explained. The way in which the interviews were carried out and the selection of the respondents are discussed also here. There is also an examination of the other data sources used in this study, namely the decision pathways questionnaire and various secondary information.

A later section of the chapter details the analysis of results, focusing on the general analytical approach adopted, the analysis of the results using a computer-based approach and the interpretation of the results. Finally, possible methodological limitations that may have affected the study outcome are discussed.

5.2 The research approach and strategy

5.2.1. The scope and applicability of qualitative methods in science

Two approaches have traditionally been used to undertake research in social sciences. The most conventional approach is that of scientific method, which is based on assumptions that data in a scientific inquiry *"must yield proof or strong confirmation, in probability terms, of a theory or hypothesis in a research setting"* (Burns, 2000:4). Within this approach, the researchers'

ultimate goal is to formulate laws that account for a phenomenon and provide the basis for prediction and control, while assuming that it does so in an objective and reliable way, and which holds true in every instance and explains every occurrence of the phenomenon (Neuman, 1997; Robson, 1993). Conversely, the qualitative approach moves away from the search for generality and consistency of the scientific method, by stating that reality cannot be subsumed within a numerical classification, and it thus shifts the focus to the individual, and it stresses the validity of multiple meanings and holistic analysis (Babbie, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Stake, 1995). Qualitative research hinges on recognising the importance of the subjective, experiential perception of the world that human beings have. This approach attempts to understand events from the viewpoint of the participants by capturing what people say and do as a consequence of how they interpret the complexity of their world.

These two approaches to research in social science have generally been treated as rivals in the literature, with researchers using qualitative methods often finding themselves *"having to defend their methods because of the resistance posed by researchers that are ideologically committed to quantitative methods"* (Burns, 2000:11). Quantitative researchers often assume that, by being more 'accurate', theirs is the best method to use in all research situations. They often expect that a qualitative inquiry should meet the same criteria of verifiability and replicability as quantitative research, and that it should thus demonstrate the reliability of its claims and the generality of its findings. Given that in qualitative research the participants' 'lifeworld' constitutes the field of inquiry, and that 'truth' within this context is bound to the perception and interpretation of each subject, then it can be argued that any attempt to emphasise the imperatives of science place unrealistic constraints on this type of research (Babbie, 1998; Goetz and LeCompte, 1984).

In fact, both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry have potential advantages and disadvantages depending on the context where they are applied. These advantages and disadvantages are reviewed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Key advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative methods. (Modified from Allan and Skinner, 1991; Babbie, 1998; de Vaus, 1996; Goetz and LeCompte, 1984; Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Moser and Kalton, 1971; Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981; Neuman, 1997; Rist, 1975; Robson, 1993; Shipman, 1997; Stake, 1995; Veal, 1997).

CHARACTERISTIC	QUANTITATIVE METHODS	QUALITATIVE METHODS
ADVANTAGES	• Apparent precision and control • Lend themselves to statistical analysis and generalisation • Provide statistical reliability to the results	• Can deal with multiple, interacting influences • Deal with processes rather than consequences, and wholeness rather than independent variables • Enable the researcher to gain an insider's view and allow observation and documentation of the interactions, subtleties and complexities of subjects • They highlight possible relationships, causes and effects, and facilitate understanding of dynamic processes
DISADVANTAGES	• Do not cope well with multiple, interacting influences • The focus on control and precision may lead to a loss of meaning and of understanding • An objective 'aura' is imposed on subjective choices • Rely on a fragmented and compartmentalised evaluation of issues, causing a simplification and distortion of reality	• Conditions and interactions that they assess can rarely be replicated • Generalisations cannot be made with any confidence. • Extensive time is required for all the stages of data collection and analysis

After an initial period in which the characteristics of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms were debated, by the end of the 1970s a situation of understanding developed, where proponents of both approaches began to agree that neither is ideal, since on their own they cannot provide answers to all questions. This prompted Cronbach (1975) to suggest that there is more than one way to gain understanding of an issue and that, although qualitative and quantitative approaches offer different perspectives, neither of them exhaust the realm of 'truth' in relation to an issue. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches can have great value but can also present significant difficulties in their application to scientific inquiry. Thus it is suggested that it is up to the

researcher to decide, according to the issues studied and the research questions pursued, which approach is best suited to achieve the particular goals and objectives of the inquiry.

This study is focused on tourism and natural resource management issues, which are largely human and social phenomena, where most decisions are based on values and politics, and where the values and perceptions of actors might be influenced by their life story and past experiences. Some commentators have suggested that this type of situation, where the research deals with both formal and unstructured decision-making processes and relationships among individuals and organisations, can best be addressed with the use of qualitative approaches (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Stake, 1995).

In this study the use of a qualitative approach, including a case study and in-depth interviews, had particular advantages over the use of quantitative methods. Some of these advantages arise from the *holistic* nature of the qualitative approach. By being case-oriented, it developed the contextuality of the issues under study, which helped to understand rather than to compare its subject matter. Another reason to take a qualitative stance in this study was that it provided an *empirical* approach, where the research was field-oriented and non-interventionist, and it emphasised observable phenomena, including observations by informants. Furthermore, by being *interpretative*, the approach allowed the researcher to be intuitive, which allowed for the recognition of relevant events and emerging issues that might otherwise have been lost. By being *emphatic*, the approach provided the researcher with the opportunity to focus on the actors, enabling the understanding of the values that framed their perceptions. The approach also enabled the researcher to assume an *emergent* and *responsive* attitude, which had a structured focus but that nonetheless was open to new developments and was aware of the risks involved in research with human subjects.

5.2.2. The research approach

In order to adequately understand and interpret the perceptions of its subjects, this study adopted a constructivist approach (Guba and Lincoln,

1989). This approach provided the researcher with epistemological, ontological, and methodological advantages in a study of stakeholders affected by tourism and resource management issues. In terms of *epistemology* -the relationship between researcher and the subjects- this approach meant that the researcher interpreted the reality through the perception of the study's subjects. But at the same time it was recognised that the researcher's own perceptions would influence the way information was perceived and interpreted, and thus there was recognition of the interaction of the researcher with the respondents (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). In terms of *ontology* -the nature of reality- the constructivist paradigm provided the means to understand the different perspectives of various actors about visitor and resource management in the context of a specific area. The ontological posture adopted in this study recognises that different stakeholders will have differing and sometimes opposing perceptions of what constitute desirable management outcomes, as their perceptions will be coloured by the prism of their personal context, background and experience. In terms of *methodology* -the way the researcher develops knowledge- this approach had the advantage that it enabled the researcher to collect information on the perceptions of actors, but also to compare and contrast those perceptions. This allowed for an informed reconstruction of reality which provided answers to the research questions and also a basis from which to develop theory (Guba, 1990). The inherent flexibility of a constructivist approach also facilitated the implementation of different methods of inquiry and the employment of a triangulation approach that allowed the researcher to best conceptualise the respondents' perceptions.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) contend that a constructivist approach is particularly suited for the assessment of stakeholders, as it entails the identification and involvement of stakeholder groups. Arguably, this approach can also be used to empower or disempower stakeholder groups through selective assessment, and by devolving power to the respondents by giving them a voice and decisions over the design, implementation and interpretation of the inquiry and its results. Although this approach was not used in this study, as stakeholder participation mostly takes the form of consultation, some of the frameworks' analytical elements, such as the interest and influence matrix

developed for this study (section 4.5.3 of Chapter 3), can potentially be used to empower weak stakeholder groups with a high degree of legitimacy through selective targeting and involvement.

5.2.3. The research design

Marshall and Rossman (1999) contend that a research design should lay out a plan for the conduct of a study, providing the researcher with direction on how to put into practice the strategies and processes that will allow the research to be operationalised and implemented.

The starting point for research design is to establish the broad research strategy. This could be deductive, where the research process starts with the formulation of theory, and then goes on to establish research propositions and to implement data collection in order to generate explanations about the causes of the phenomena under study (Blaikie, 1993; Sayer, 1992). Alternatively, the research design can take an inductive approach, where the analysis of relevant observations about the phenomena under study leads to the construction of a theory that systematically links such observations in a meaningful way (Blaikie, 1993; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Thus, research can start by making observations or gathering data in order to develop explanations; or, alternatively, it can begin with a theory, hypothesis or a model which is then evaluated by making observations or gathering data. These different approaches can be described as the generation of theory (induction) or the application of theory (deduction).

The research strategy followed in this study was deductive → inductive → deductive, whereby a conceptual framework was initially developed deductively from the review and synthesis of two separate bodies of literature, these being the research on visitor management and on stakeholder theory. This framework sets out a mechanism for stakeholders to be included in decision-making for tourism and resource management. The study then goes on to assess and further refine this framework through an inductive approach, whereby a case study is selected and analysed in order to apply the framework in a specific visitor management situation. By implementing the framework in a

case study it is then possible to reflect on the results and to use these practical implications to adapt the framework through more conceptual work. However, it is recognised that inductive elements also had an early influence in the development of this study's framework, as the context of the problems of participation in developing countries was influenced by the researcher's own experiences and previous work, and the reading of literature related to the subject of inquiry in this study. Thus, it can be argued that up to some extent the development of the conceptual framework for this study followed a process of "induction → deduction → induction → deduction".

The next section reviews how conceptual frameworks can be used in social research to develop a theoretical body of knowledge, and how case studies can provide a basis for the further refinement and generalisation of these frameworks.

5.2.4. The value of conceptual frameworks and case studies in social research

According to Stake (1995), social science research requires some form of conceptual organisation, such as a conceptual framework. This allows ideas to be formulated to advance understanding and to build conceptual bridges from established bodies of theory, and it helps in the formulation of cognitive structures to guide data gathering, interpretation and presentation. In essence, the goal of a conceptual framework is to allow the researcher to understand why certain social phenomena are occurring, and to facilitate this understanding by searching for relationships or causes and effects, and by expressing them through theory (Stake, 1995). The creation of a conceptual framework is based on the formulation of a set of theoretical principles that attempt to explain a particular aspect of a social phenomenon, usually in a way that can be generalised to other social processes that develop under the same principles. A sound conceptual framework should respond to five aspects of research design. These aspects are (1) What are the questions or issues that the research is trying to answer? (2) What theoretical propositions give focus or direction to the inquiry? (3) What is the unit of analysis to be studied? (4) How are the collected data to be linked to the theoretical propositions? And (5) Which criteria are to be

used to interpret the study findings? (Yin, 1993). In other words, the conceptual framework provides a self-contained "theory" of what is being studied. It acts as a guiding "map" for the study, aiding understanding and explanation of the phenomenon being studied. According to Yin (1993), a conceptual framework should provide the framework that defines the appropriate research design and data collection, and it should also be a vehicle for the generalisation of the study results.

In sum, conceptual frameworks function as theoretical extensions of a body of knowledge to facilitate the understanding of social phenomena, and they allow for the development of theory through its evaluation and generalisation in relation to different scenarios. One of the ways in which a conceptual framework can be assessed and expanded is through its application in a case study, where a real life situation is analysed and understood, and the analytical implications can then be used to assess, understand and generalise other similar scenarios. The conceptual framework that constitutes the deductive stage of this study is reviewed in detail in Chapter 4, while the reasons for the selection of the particular case study in the inductive stage are explained in Section 5.3. Background information about Los Roques National Park and Venezuela was provided in Chapter 3.

5.3 The Case Study

5.3.1 Justification of the case study approach

Case study research typically is employed to explore real life events over which the researcher has little control, and where the boundaries between context and the events are not readily evident (Yin, 1993:23). These events are explored using multiple sources of evidence, but in such a way that the holistic and meaningful attributes are preserved and can be understood by the researcher (Robson, 1993; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1993). This study opted for a case study approach as one of its main goals is to assess relationships between stakeholders in a resource management context, and this required a rich understanding of the related context.

Through the application of case study approaches, social science researchers can look to *"establish generalisations that hold in diverse situations"* (Stake, 1995:39). The use of a case study approach in this way can thus be used to provide insights into issues or theory beyond the immediate research context, which can then be extended to other cases of collective interest (Yin, 1993). However, most case studies emphasise interpretation, where the researcher observes and records the workings of the case, and also simultaneously examines its meanings and redirects the observations to refine or substantiate those meanings (Stake, 1995).

Case studies can be particularly valuable to develop and advance theory because they are so intensive and generate such rich subjective data. This brings to light variables, processes and relationships that allow for a better understanding of the phenomena being studied. Case studies also provide an opportunity to try out theoretical principles that later can be developed to construct generalisations about a wider population to which the case study belongs (Moser and Kalton, 1971; de Vaus, 1996). A case study approach was considered appropriate as this study develops and implements a framework for the identification and assessment of stakeholders in a visitor management situation. The use of this approach was intended to provide the basis for other practitioners in the fields of visitor and resource management to generalise the study's results in relation to other similar situations (Stake, 1995).

5.3.2 The Los Roques National Park case study

To assess the applicability of the framework developed for this study it was applied to the case of the Archipelago Los Roques National Park, this being located off the coast of central Venezuela. A key reason for this choice was the park's location in a less developed country where there is a minimal tradition of stakeholder consultation in planning processes due to a history of authoritarian and centralised management. The application in these contexts of participative decision-making frameworks is likely to fail due to the lack of participative mechanisms and resistance from powerful stakeholders. However, stakeholder involvement might be encouraged using the framework developed for this study.

A second reason to choose the Los Roques National Park was its status as a protected area of natural beauty, ecological value and environmental fragility, and as a protected area that attracted 10% of the tourists that visit Venezuela (Asoproroques, 1999). It was the third most important tourist destination in Venezuela, and this suggested that the management of tourism there was important for the affected stakeholders. Furthermore, a concern already existed among the main park authorities about the overuse of park resources by tourism (AUA, 1997b, INPARQUES, 1998; Ornat, 1997).

An additional advantage of selecting this park was the researcher's long involvement with the area, having lived and previously having undertaken research there over a period of ten years, first as an environmental scientist and then as a tourism consultant. This previous involvement provided rich insights into the area's management, the politics involved and the stakeholder interests and needs. A more detailed description of the Los Roques National Park was provided in Chapter 3, along with background on Venezuela.

5.4 Data collection instruments used

Implement the case study approach involved developing a conceptual framework to guide the inquiry, the research questions that define the issues to be examined, a sampling strategy to collect the required information, and the appropriate data collection instruments to gather it (Burns, 2000; Robson, 1993; Yin, 1993). This study uses three different data collection instruments, these being: first, a review of secondary data; second, in-depth interviews; and third, a decision pathways questionnaire. This section reviews the characteristics of these instruments and explains why they were selected.

5.4.1. Secondary data

According to Yin (1993), it is necessary to pay explicit attention to the contextual conditions affecting the phenomenon being studied and to the broader range of knowledge as set out by previous research. Thus secondary data sources were consulted particularly prior to developing the study's conceptual framework. The small amount of published research or reports on

visitor and natural resource management in Los Roques and even in Venezuela was gathered. This research and reports included the Los Roques National Park Management Plan, the decree that established the Central Co-ordinating Authority, annual reports and monthly information publications, two internal reports from the Spanish International Co-operation Agency, two of the researcher's own consultancy reports on the area, and various books relating to public policy and the national park system in Venezuela. A review was also conducted of a daily Venezuelan newspaper with a national circulation (the *El Universal*) through the World Wide Web. Information on Venezuela was reviewed in section 3.2 of Chapter 3, and on Los Roques in section 3.3. During the preparation phase prior to the fieldwork, the researcher also kept contact with two environmental consultants who were knowledgeable about Los Roques and its management, so that the researcher kept abreast of the main developments in the park while he was in the UK.

The review of these secondary data sources provided a broad understanding of the context in which tourism and natural resources were managed in Los Roques National Park, and it helped in developing a conceptual framework that reflected the local context in which it would be tested. However, given the objectives of this study, the collection of primary data was also necessary and this required the design and implementation of interviews in the field.

5.4.2. Semi-structured interviews

There were several reasons for the choice of interviews rather than other data collection instruments in this case study. In this study the number of potential respondents was relatively low, so using interviews guaranteed that an appropriate information return would be obtained, particularly when compared to other methods such as self-completion questionnaires, which tend to have a low response rate. Interviews were also favoured as they encourage respondents to express their views in an open way, as well as in their own words, thus reducing the chance that issues that they considered important would be overlooked (Burns, 2000; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Yin, 1993).

A semi-structured interview format was chosen for this study, whereby the interview schedule had fairly structured questions arranged thematically in relation to the conceptual framework, but it was designed in a way that allowed the use of prompts, and to follow-up relevant lines of inquiry that the interviewees considered important. This approach also allowed for variation in the question sequence when this was deemed appropriate by the researcher, such as when an issue had already been covered in a previous question, or when there was the need to provide the respondent with an opportunity for further explanation. According to Robson (1993:231), the use of semi-structured interviews provides greater flexibility in the data collection strategy, as the researcher can alter the interview *"based upon its perception of what seems most appropriate in the context of the conversation"*.

A semi-structured interview approach was chosen for several reasons. As it was necessary to inquire about a relatively large number of issues, the use of semi-structured interviews helped respondents to focus only on the issues that were central to the study. This not only helped to obtain relevant information, but also reduced the possibility of respondents drifting into issues irrelevant to the study and prolonging the time required to complete the interview, which eventually could have resulted in short answers being given to later questions due to tiredness or boredom. Semi-structured interviews were also selected as the study required a comparative analysis of the perceptions from different stakeholder groups about common issues, thus requiring that all interviewees were questioned about the same issues. Finally, this approach allowed the researcher to seek clarification and gave interviewees the opportunity to elaborate about issues that may not have been sufficiently explained.

As the interviews were designed to assess all possible scenarios for tourism and natural resource management in the Los Roques National Park, certain questions in the interview schedule were not relevant to some stakeholders. Thus, some questions about regulatory responsibilities were not posed to stakeholders for whom this was not relevant (typically, stakeholders from the tourism and NGO interest groups) and some questions about resource

use were not put to stakeholders who had only a regulatory function (typically government stakeholders).

The thematic areas and questions in the interviews were designed based on the study's aims and objectives (as outlined in Chapter 1) and its conceptual framework (discussed in Chapter 4). The main aims of the interviews were to identify and assess the views of the stakeholders affected by tourism management proposals, and to assess the potential influence of stakeholders in relation to the management of the park's resources. These aims were met through four thematic areas. These were:

a) The identification of stakeholders.

b) The identification of resources considered valuable and those used and affected by tourism. This included the assessment of problems in relation to the management of tourism and resources, and of the resource needs and management preferences of the stakeholders.

c) Assessment of the attributes of the previously identified stakeholders in order to identify their interest in the management process and their degree of influence on it.

d) The evaluation of the park's most likely management options.

The interview was designed as four subsets or thematic areas with distinct questions relating to specific areas of the conceptual framework, but all four subsets were used concurrently, and thus are referred to as 'the interview'. The interview contained a total of 39 questions, but only the first 34 where addressed to all stakeholders. The remaining five questions referred to the last thematic area (assessment of feasible management scenarios), and they were only put to stakeholders with the most management authority in the park (Appendix 5.1).

The first thematic area in the interview covered the first 12 questions, and these relate to step one of the Stakeholder Assessment Framework (STA), that of stakeholder identification. Questions 1 to 8 examined which of the organisations previously selected through a purposive sampling process are identifiable "stakeholders". Questions 9 to 12 sought views on other relevant

stakeholders in addition to those previously identified through the snowball technique.

Questions 13 to 29 related to the interview's second thematic area and these correspond to step two of the STA framework, that of assessing the management issues related to stakeholder preferences. The first two questions related to views on the destination's resources, while the next three questions sought views on which resources were used and affected by tourism. Questions 18 to 21 solicited opinions on problems related to tourism's use of the destination resources, while the remaining questions (22 to 29) assessed opinions on stakeholder resource needs and their management preferences. The management preferences of these stakeholders were also assessed using a decision pathways questionnaire.

Questions 30 to 34 related to the third thematic area of the interview, which corresponds to step three of the STA Framework, this being the analysis and mapping of stakeholder influence. These questions generated the data used to assess the stakeholders in terms of their interest in the management of the park and their degree of influence on it. As discussed in section 4.5.3. of Chapter 4, this information was used to place stakeholders in a matrix that describes their potential interest in, and influence on the park's management.

The final five questions in the interview assessed views on the park's most likely management options, with this information being used along with the opinions on stakeholder management preferences to assess future potential conflicts around park management. This assessment partly corresponds to step 4 of the STA framework, that of stakeholder management. Since these questions were targeted at key policy-makers who had most influence on the park's policies, they were put to only five of the 31 interviewees. These questions attempted to identify the realistic constraints that will determine the management decisions that are likely to be taken, and to assess the management options likely to be favoured in the decision-making process.

Great care was taken in administering the interview. A carefully prepared introductory letter explained the purpose of the study, the nature of the

information being sought, and the use to be made of the information. It gave assurances that all information would remain confidential and would be used only for research purposes, and that the respondent's identity would remain anonymous. This letter was faxed or handed personally to each respondent prior to the interview, when an appointment was being arranged. The researcher also attempted to telephone each respondent to explain the general issues to be discussed during the interview, thus providing the respondents with an additional opportunity to seek further clarification about the research and to enable them to gather supporting information from their files. The information in the introductory letter was also reiterated prior to the start of each interview, and if necessary a copy of the letter was also handed to the respondent. Both the letter and the verbal introduction stated that the interview would be completed in about 45 to 60 minutes, depending on the respondent. Appointments were made that suited each respondent in terms of time and location, thus helping to reduce the possibility of interruptions or inconveniences that might lead to an early termination of the interview.

Prior to commencing the interview, the researcher thanked the respondents for their co-operation, and informed them that they did not have to reply to a particular question if they felt it was inappropriate, and also that they could finish the interview early if they so wished. Permission to tape the interview with a recording device was sought and obtained from all respondents.

During each interview the researcher kept track of the questions asked by ticking them off in a notebook. When a respondent mentioned important issues during the interview, such as a suggestion for the researcher to contact another person, a written note was made. As soon as possible after the conclusion of each interview, the researcher also made notes about emergent issues and about the respondents' comments or attitudes that would assist in future interpretation and would give supporting context to the collected information. The interviews were conducted in the locations chosen by respondents, and they ranged from 35 up to 150 minutes in duration, with an average length of 60 minutes. During the interview the researcher took a neutral

role, presenting a friendly, conversational and non-judgemental stance, while at the same time the researcher sought to focus the "conversation" toward the aims of the interview (Burns, 2000; Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

After the conclusion of the fieldwork, all interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated from Spanish to English, with these transcriptions serving as part of the database for further analysis. At the end of the interview, the researcher handed the decision pathways questionnaire to all respondents for later completion.

5.4.3. Decision pathways questionnaire

The researcher suspected that when respondents were asked about their management preferences in the interviews, this might have resulted in respondents choosing scenarios corresponding to their perceptions of what is desirable for the park, rather than responses that reflected their own interests, particularly if these were perceived to be detrimental. Thus, it was decided that triangulation was required in order to seek to reveal any "hidden agendas" behind the preferences for park management as revealed in the interviews (Decrop, 1999; Flick, 1992). The triangulation was implemented through a decision pathways questionnaire (Gregory *et al.*, 1997; Satterfield and Gregory, 1998) that used a different approach to reveal the management preferences of stakeholders. This questionnaire also focused on the degree of commitment of stakeholders to their expressed management preferences.

According to Gregory *et al.* (1997:240), decision pathways questionnaires *"present respondents with a set of linked questions that encourage the deliberate construction of expressed values in the course of selecting a preferred resource-management alternative"*. They go on to suggest that when specific pathways are selected or avoided, important information is revealed about the respondents' key trade-offs and about their reasoning processes. Satterfield and Gregory (1998) argue that the application of a decision pathway approach helps to bridge the gap between environmental values and management decisions by assisting respondents to frame the context in which these decisions are made, by defining the key objectives that

decisions are trying to achieve, and by making explicit the need for trade-offs between competing but desirable objectives.

The decision pathways questionnaire used in this study allowed stakeholders to select their organisation's preferred management scenario from seven possible choices, designed around various degrees of resource conservation, expressed in terms of modifications of two criteria: the current level of visitor numbers, and the level of management measures applied in the park. It is acknowledged that the decision to restrict the questionnaire's management paths to only seven choices resulted in an oversimplification of the management options applicable in the park, and thus offered stakeholders relatively few decision "paths" to choose from. However, it was felt that the choices presented to the stakeholders were focused on what was expected to be the most contested and controversial issue in any tourism and resource management plan for Los Roques, this being the volume of visitors and the level of resource use that the area could accommodate. The management options in the questionnaire also concentrated stakeholder choices on one of the few aspects of management that managers have direct control of, this being the level of management that they apply. Hence, while the choices presented to the stakeholders were perhaps constrained, the practical value of the information gathered was increased by focusing on the key issues faced by the managers and on the management aspect over which the managers had more control. Moreover, it enabled the examination of realistic management compromises by the stakeholders.

Three design criteria were taken into account when developing the management scenarios in the decision pathways questionnaire. These were the level of resource use by tourism, the amount of visitors coming to the park, and the management measures applied to control those visitors. However, in order to have a manageable number of options, it was assumed that the level of resource use and the number of visitors would increase in parallel. This meant that if one was increased, then the other also increased, and if a management measure resulted in a reduction of one, then the other was also reduced. Thus, the management scenarios presented in the questionnaire only specify

variations in visitor numbers, and assume that this also meant a similar variation in the level of resource use. This made the questionnaire more user friendly and reduced the complexity of its application, enabling the presentation of management choices that were readily familiar to the respondents, and with consequences that they could easily visualise.

In designing the scenarios, the parameter 'visitor numbers' was defined as the number of visitors per unit of time that used a given resource as a result of a given management scenario. The resulting management categories involve equal, increased or reduced numbers of visitors compared with current numbers. The parameter 'management measures' referred to the level of non-restrictive and restrictive management measures that should be applied to conserve the park's resources. Restrictive measures implied modifications in the levels of use and visitor numbers allowed, whereas non-restrictive measures referred to management measures such as the provision of information, the use of tourist guides, and resource hardening. The resulting management categories were equal, increased or reduced management measures compared with those currently employed. When a feasible management scenario calls for increased levels of use and increased management, it is assumed that restrictive management measures are reduced to allow for more use, while non-restrictive measures are increased to allow for more management.

Finally, the parameter 'resource conservation' was defined as the degree of conservation of the park's natural resources resulting from the application of a given management scenario, compared to current conservation leves. The resulting categories were reduced, increased or balanced resource conservation, with the last category referring to a hypothetical situation where, given the manipulation of all other criteria, a constant state of resource conservation was achieved over time. It was assumed that the resource conservation criterion acted as a variable that depended on the other three, that is, the degree to which the park's resources were preserved was the end result of manipulating management measures, visitor numbers and levels of resource use.

The seven feasible management 'paths' generated for the decision pathways questionnaire are described in Table 5.1, and a blank of the questionnaire used is included in Appendix 5.2. The scenarios in Table 5.2 are discriminated according to variations in the number of visitors (maintained, increased or reduced), and as result of their application they lead to three different levels of resource conservation, these being maintained, increased or reduced.

Table 5.2. Description of the management paths built into the decision pathways questionnaire.

PATH NUMBER	PATH DESCRIPTION
Management paths with maintained visitor numbers	
PATH 1 Maintained visitation and maintained management.	The amount of visitors and management measures are maintained. It is assumed that this path leads to a gradual decrease in resource conservation.
PATH 2 Maintained visitation and reduced management.	The amount of visitors is maintained, while the management measures are reduced. It is assumed that this path leads to a decrease in resource conservation.
PATH 3 Maintained visitation and increased management.	The amount of visitors is maintained and the management measures are increased. It is assumed that this path leads to either a balance or an increase in resource conservation.
Management paths with increased visitor numbers	
PATH 4 Increased visitation and maintained management.	The amount of visitors is increased, while the management measures are maintained. It is assumed that this path leads to a decrease in resource conservation.
PATH 5 Increased visitation and increased management.	The amount of visitors is increased along with the management measures. It is assumed that this path leads to either a decrease or a balance in resource conservation.
Management paths with reduced visitor numbers	
PATH 6 Reduced visitation and maintained management.	The amount of visitors is reduced, while the management measures are maintained. It is assumed that this path leads to a balance or an increase in resource conservation.
PATH 7 Reduced visitation and increased management.	The amount of visitors is reduced, while the management measures are increased. It is assumed that this path leads to an increase in resource conservation.

The questionnaire was designed for self-completion and asked respondents to provide the views of their organisation, while it provided guidance to the respondents through the use of prompts and detailed instructions. In order to avoid overloading the respondents, they were handed the questionnaire immediately after the completion of the interview but were requested to complete it during a week-long period, after which the researcher visited them. Prior to the collection of the completed questionnaires, the researcher contacted each respondent by telephone and confirmed their

completion. In those cases where they had not been completed, the respondent sent another copy along with a follow-up letter, and requested its completion in the following seven days. There where five instances were the respondents chose to complete the questionnaire immediately after the interview, and seven respondents out of 31 did not return the questionnaire in spite of repeated telephone calls and further copies of it being provided by the researcher. There was no noticeable pattern in the respondents that chose not to return the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were processed by noting and categorising the response to each question in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and by comparing the created paths with those originally designed into the questionnaire.

5.4.4. Triangulation

In accordance with the literature on methodological issues, this study combined multiple methods and data sources as a strategy to add analytical rigour and depth (Decrop, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Flick, 1992; Selin and Chavez, 1995). The application of this strategy, known as triangulation (Decrop, 1999), helps to control the researcher's biases that may be created by being the sole observer of a phenomenon (Selin and Chavez, 1995). By enquiring about the same issue through different research instruments, the researcher may reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), and this may facilitate the understanding of different perceptions on a phenomenon (Flick, 1992). This study applied a triangulation strategy whereby both interviews and decision pathways questionnaires where used to collect information about the stakeholders' preferences in terms of future management scenarios for Los Roques National Park. This strategy was also used within the interview, allowing the respondents several opportunities to provide information about critical or important issues by using subtle wording differences to ask about similar issues in two different questions. A triangulation approach was also used to compare and review the past steps taken by stakeholders in the secondary data sources that were collected prior to the fieldwork.

5.5 Data collection procedures

5.5.1 Desk research and fieldwork preparation

Desk research was conducted prior to the fieldwork in order to gain a better understanding of the issues that may have been affecting the research topic, and to aid the design of the study's conceptual frameworks (Robson, 1993). This desk research started in the early stages of this study (in 1998), once it had been decided that a case study would be used of a Venezuelan national park.

The desk research included the review, both in journals and books, of relevant literature related to the management of visitors in natural areas and the development and application of stakeholder theory. This review was carried out intensively during the first year of the research and continued until the thesis was completed, and it was central to the design and refinement of the conceptual frameworks. This process also included reviewing secondary data published about Los Roques National Park, the management and administration of the Venezuelan national park system, and the management of tourism in Venezuela.

The desk research not only facilitated the formulation of the conceptual frameworks, but also provided the researcher with an awareness of the current state of knowledge in the subject area and helped in relating this study to the wider context of tourism and resource management in natural areas (Finn *et al.*, 2000; Gill and Johnson, 1991). The process of reviewing secondary information prior to the design of the conceptual frameworks was in line with the constructivist approach used in this study (Glaser and Straus, 1967; Guba and Lincoln, 1989). It assisted in the iterative process where secondary data provided guidance for the design of the conceptual frameworks, and was later used in the data analysis process to assist in identifying patterns and comparing them with those noted in the secondary sources. This iterative process allowed for the emergence of information relevant to the study (Locke, 1996).

The researcher maintained regular contact with the Superintendent of the Los Roques National Park and the Spanish International Co-operation Agency's

representative for the park and this was invaluable in preparing for the fieldwork and for each field visit in Venezuela. These regular contacts allowed the researcher to keep abreast of latest developments, obtain contact details of potential interviewees, and secure logistical support for visits to the park. Whenever possible, the researcher also contacted and sought the assistance of the respondents to be interviewed prior to the commencement of the fieldwork. But this was not always possible, particularly for respondents who lived in the park, where no postal service or residential telephone network existed.

The collection of primary data was undertaken in two fieldwork periods, the first one for three moths, from August to October of 1999, and the second one for approximately one month, in February and March 2001. There were several reasons to divide the data collection in two fieldwork periods. As explained in Chapter 3 (Los Roques National Park), in 1999 when the first fieldwork period took place there were several profound changes taking place both within the national park and the country. These nation-wide changes affected Venezuela's constitutional and legislative framework, resulting in a legislative vacuum for all activities. This in turn caused a significant degree of uncertainty for many respondents, who felt that all changes and issues had been put on hold, and would remain so until the constitutional order of the country was re-established. The arrival of a new political party into office also led to many top government representatives being replaced, including several targeted for interview or who had already been interviewed.

Given this legislative uncertainty and the replacement of top government officials targeted for interview, it was decided that a second round of interviews was required at a later period in order to better understand the constraints and opportunities that might be faced with the management of tourism in Los Roques National Park. This also provided an opportunity to include additional stakeholders in the sample, particularly recently appointed government officials. This also increased confidence in the previous observed patterns, as well as provided additional data for triangulation. The second fieldwork also added a longitudinal dimension to the study, allowing for observation of the evolution of changes in the park, and provided the researcher with further opportunities to

validate the observations and conclusions reached during the first fieldwork phase.

5.5.2 The pilots

Pilots were conducted in order to assess and improve the face-to-face interview schedule and the decision pathways questionnaire. This evaluation was carried out for several reasons. The first was to ensure that the questions were worded so they conveyed the exact meaning sought by the researcher. This was important as the interview and questionnaire were designed in English and later translated into Spanish. The second reason to undertake the pilot with the interview schedule was to make sure it could be completed in a reasonable length of time without causing respondent fatigue. Finally, the pilots allowed for assessments of the overall appropriateness of the survey instruments in relation to the data needs of the research.

The pilots were undertaken in two stages. The first stage was conducted prior to the commencement of the fieldwork with a person who was not taking part in the study but who had lived and worked in Los Roques National Park for three years, and so was familiar with the study area and with several of the targeted respondents, as well as with the type of problems that the study might encounter. This first pilot highlighted only minor problems in the interview, mostly related to the wording used in some questions in the Spanish version, and these were corrected by making slight modifications. The person who assisted also made valuable suggestions, offered insider knowledge about which individuals could act as representatives of certain interests and groups in Los Roques, and made useful comments on the best times and locations to approach some of the respondents. No corrections seemed necessary to the decision pathways questionnaire as a result of this pilot.

The second stage of the pilot was undertaken with the first two respondents, when particular attention was paid to observing if the respondents encountered any difficulties with either the interview or the questionnaire. At the end of the session both respondents were also asked if they experienced any difficulty in answering either the interview or the questionnaire, and their

suggestions were solicited for improving them. However, neither of the respondents suggested modifications with these research instruments, and neither found difficulties with them. Hence, no modifications were made as a result of this second piloting, and the information collected was considered adequate and included in the research data. However, it was noted that one interviewee took about 150 minutes to complete the interview due to the extended comments made in their replies. In order to avoid the recurrence of this situation and thus avoid respondent fatigue, specially designed prompts were prepared to help them to focus on the issues they were being asked about, and help steer them away from commenting on issues that were not relevant to the research. These prompts included the researcher remarking that in spite of the interesting nature of the respondent's comments, they did not directly relate to the topic of the study, and suggesting further discussion of those issues at the end of the interview.

5.5.3 Selection of interviewees

Two procedures were used to select the interviewees for this research, the first one being a purposive sample and the other a snowball sampling method. This combination was chosen because it ensured that individuals selected for interviewing would be those who were involved in, or were knowledgeable about the management of Los Roques National Park, and who were representatives of stakeholder groups relevant to this research. Both of these sampling methods constitute a type of non-probability sampling, this meaning that the characteristics of the sampling unit are likely to be varied and cannot be predicted by the researcher (de Vaus, 1996; Robson, 1993).

5.5.4 Purposive sampling

Purposive samples are defined as those where the sampling units chosen for study satisfy specific theoretical and empirical characteristics that make them of interest to the researcher, and thus are not randomly selected (de Vaus, 1996). Purposive samples are considered an accepted research procedure in those situations where the researcher uses judgement to select cases that fulfil a specific research objective, usually involving in-depth research (Babbie, 1998; Neuman, 1997). This type of sample can allow sufficient data to

be collected to be able to examine a specific issue or objective set out by the researcher, while taking account of considerations about desirability and feasibility (Babbie, 1998).

This study used a purposive sampling both for the selection of the 'core' group of interviewees required to initiate the snowball sampling and for the assessment of the national park's most likely management scenarios. The use of purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select interviewees who could provide the information required to implement the snowball sampling, as it targeted individuals who were involved with the management of tourism and the natural resources in the park, and who acted as information gatekeepers. By identifying these information gatekeepers, a 'critical mass' of respondents was interviewed to then identify other stakeholder groups related to the park's management. Specific criteria were developed for the identification of these information gatekeepers, with them being selected and interviewed to initiate the snowball process if they met any of these criteria. These criteria are detailed under criteria A2 of Table 4.2 in section 4.5.1 of Chapter 4. In order to confirm that these individuals were stakeholders relevant to the park's management, they were further screened with criteria A1 for stakeholder identification, which is described in Table 4.2 of Chapter 4.

The secondary documentation obtained prior to the fieldwork was reviewed with the criteria for the identification of information gatekeepers in order to identify relevant respondents required to initiate the snowball process. The documents reviewed included legal or descriptive information about the park, listings of area users and permit-holders for specific activities, lists of organisations with jurisdictional authority in the area, and documents identifying organisations with previous involvement in the area. Three respondents were selected and interviewed as a result of the documentation review, these being a former representative of the Central Co-ordinating Authority, a representative of the Los Roques National Park working for INPARQUES, and a former representative of the Los Roques Tourism Operators' Association. These individuals were chosen because the first two represented the institutions with the most regulatory authority in the park, and the third because the Association,

and this representative in particular, had a long involvement with the park and with the diverse interest groups. These three respondents thus constituted the starting point for the snowball sampling.

A further purposive sample was also required in order to identify the management scenarios that were most likely to be implemented in the national park. This was considered an essential step in the conceptual framework because the authoritarian tradition in the Venezuelan national parks meant that most decisions were usually taken with little or no consultation with affected stakeholders. Hence, the identification of the most likely management scenarios was important as a reference against which to compare the preferred management scenarios of the stakeholders. For this purpose, the representatives of the institutions with most influence over the park's management were identified using criteria A3 of Table 4.2, which is presented in Chapter 4. The application of these criteria is detailed in section 4.5.1 of the same chapter, which describes the implementation of Step 1 of the STA framework (stakeholder identification).

Using the criteria for the identification of representatives from the park's most influential institutions, five respondents were chosen to assess the management scenarios that were most likely to be implemented, these being two former representatives of the Central Co-ordinating Authority and its current representative, and the former and current representatives of the Los Roques National Park. Three of these interviewees had already been selected and interviewed during the process of identifying information gatekeepers for snowball purposes.

The use of purposive samples resulted in several distinct advantages for this study. Foremost was that it allowed the researcher to adjust the characteristics of the case study to the requirements of the research, specifically to identify and assess only those individuals deemed relevant to the study objectives. This in turn resulted in a sample with the necessary characteristics to evaluate the conceptual frameworks relating to the management of visitors and resources in a natural area. Finally, this sampling

represented a efficient investment of the limited time and financial resources that the researcher had to implement and complete the fieldwork process.

5.5.5 Snowball sampling

After having constructed an initial stakeholder group for interviewing, the next step in the sampling process was to identify further stakeholders relevant to the park's management using a snowball sampling method. This involved the use of an explicit mechanism for stakeholder identification where the previously identified respondents were asked to nominate additional stakeholders. This is a particular type of multi-stage, purposive sample, aimed at establishing an interconnected web of samples, which *"begins with one or a few people or cases and spreads out on the basis of links to the initial cases"* (Neuman, 1997:207). Snowball sampling or snowballing has successfully been used by practitioners researching stakeholder theory to identify stakeholder groups and to study relationships among them (Bryson, 1988; Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Finn, 1996; Rowley, 1997). According to Rowley (1997), the application of a snowball technique to stakeholder identification reduces the potential bias caused by managers or researchers, as the selection process is based on the perceptions of the stakeholders themselves.

The snowball sampling was initiated by interviewing the initial 'core' group of three stakeholders previously identified (see Section 5.5.4). Additional stakeholders were identified by interviewing the 'core' group and probing their relationships with other organisations using carefully designed questions, which identified relevant actors related both to them and to the management of the park. These questions are based on criteria A4 for stakeholder identification by snowball, which are presented in Table 4.2 of Chapter 4 and explained in detail in section 4.5.1 of the same chapter. These questions correspond to question 9 to 12 in Appendix 5.1. The use of these questions made it possible to identify other stakeholders beyond to the 'core group' through a process where the stakeholders themselves, and not the researcher, nominated who should be regarded as having a stake in the management of the park's tourism and natural resources.

Each of the organisations mentioned during the snowballing process was screened further with the criteria set out for the identification of stakeholders (criteria A1 for stakeholder identification, which is described in Table 4.2 of Chapter 4). This cross-checking ensured that the researcher agreed that the nominated organisation had a stake in the park's management and should be included for further analysis as a stakeholder. Once these new nominees have been positively identified as stakeholders, they in turn were interviewed to try and identify further stakeholders through their relationships with other actors who could be relevant to park management. A list of nominated stakeholders was kept and updated after each interview in order to keep track of organisations that had been nominated by previously identified stakeholders and which should be interviewed.

In order to be able to establish a limit where the snowball process would be terminated and no further interviews would be made, a cut-off limit to the inclusion of a nominated stakeholder in the interview process was established. This limit was based on the number of times that a stakeholder had to be mentioned, and was operationalised as a set of criteria which are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Criteria to establish the cut-off limit for stakeholder identification during the snowball process.

• The nominee is at the end of the stakeholder chain, that is, they have been mentioned less than three times by other previously interviewed stakeholders, and thus they are not considered for interviewing in that particular link (modified from Rowley, 1997).
• The nominee has been mentioned three or more times, but is not affected by the use of the resources or any change in its management, and hence is not a stakeholder.

This limit to the inclusion of new stakeholders was established in order to keep the respondent group of a manageable size for interview purposes. Further, the STA framework requires the stakeholder group to be of a size that is manageable for decision-making purposes. For those reasons a threshold of

three or more mentions was established before a given nominee was considered as a new stakeholder and thus was interviewed. This threshold was chosen because it was perceived to exclude those respondents with minimum involvement in the use or management of the park's resources.

5.6 Analysis of results

This study collected a large amount of qualitative data in the form of interview transcripts and, to a lesser extent, questionnaires. To analyse this information in a meaningful way that enabled the researcher to evaluate the conceptual frameworks, an interpretative stance was assumed. This involved the researcher going *"beyond what is directly said in order to work out structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent in the text"* (Kvale, 1996: 201). This approach requires that the researcher distances themselves from the contextual level of the data by interpreting what was said from within a particular theoretical and methodological stance. In the case of this research the adopted theoretical stance is a constructivist one. This approach was implemented by using the STA and STREM frameworks to provide the analytical context, while conceptual distance was established from the data by applying the "Framework" analytical approach proposed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994), coupled with the development of a coding map that was analysed using N-Vivo software for qualitative analysis (QSR, 1999). This section explains the "Framework" analytical model and how it was applied to the collected data, and how the analysis was enhanced by using a coding map developed by the researcher and integrated into the qualitative analytical software package.

5.6.1. The "Framework" analysis approach

This study adapted a modified version of the "Framework" analytical approach of Ritchie and Spencer (1994) to provide a systematic means of handling and analysing the collected information. The "Framework" approach involves five interconnected steps, and its application commences once information has been collected in the field.

The first step of the "Framework" approach consists of a process of familiarisation by the researcher, who reviews the range and diversity of the data in order to gain an overview and to list emerging key ideas and recurrent themes. The second step involves the identification of a thematic framework of issues and concepts arising from the recurrence and patterning of the responses. The third step involves a charting process, where the previously listed issues and concepts are organised in a structured and thematic way dictated by the thematic framework. The fourth step consists of mapping and interpreting the data by identifying key characteristics and by linking and explaining the observed patterns and connections in the broader data set. The fifth and final step relates to the interpretation of the broader findings and relationships in relation to the wider conceptual frameworks or bodies of knowledge.

The "Framework" approach is useful in applied qualitative research, where it can provide a contextualising strategy that is particularly well suited for the analysis of case studies. It provides a structure that places the views and attitudes of respondents into a conceptual framework that is organised according to the aims of the study. This approach provides coherence and structure to qualitative data that is inherently difficult to handle, while retaining the original accounts from which the data is derived. It also provides a systematic way to explore and map qualitative data and to categorise, theorise and explain the results of an inquiry (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994).

5.6.2. The thematic index used in this study

This study applied the "Framework" analytical approach in a modified form. This is because, instead of identifying and developing a thematic framework wholly inductively from the data, the researcher developed a combined deductive and inductive thematic index framework. This thematic index provided the main interpretative tool to organise and contextualise the findings, and to relate them to the study's conceptual frameworks. It not only considered *a priori* issues, but following Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) proposed guidelines, the index also considered analytical themes base on the recurrence and patterning of respondents' views and also emergent issues arising from

these views. Both the analytical themes and emergent issues were handled in an inductive manner, with categories developed empirically based on the views of the respondents. When the analysis process was completed, the index contained 12 themes or subject areas and 65 thematic codes or research issues, which are presented in Table 5.4 at the end of this chapter.

The different criteria developed for each step of the STA framework provided the initial basis on which to build the thematic index. These criteria, which are detailed in Chapter 4 (Conceptual Framework), provide a systematic and robust basis for each step of the STA framework and also for the development of the interview questions. Thus, it was logical to use these criteria to build the thematic index or research issues for the data analysis. These criteria relate to the identification of stakeholders, the assessment of their attributes and relationships, their needs and expectations in relation to the management of the resources, as well as the identification of valued resources and those used and affected by tourism. In order to build the thematic index, the researcher noted the information that was required for each thematic code or research issue, and this information was then related to the resulting 65 thematic codes that constitute the index.

Each thematic code was related to each interview transcript. Although the interview contained specific questions that related directly to the information required by each thematic code, the whole interview transcript was scanned for information relevant to each thematic code or research issue. Thus it provided the basis for a full "content analysis" of the respondents' comments. The main advantage of undertaking the analysis in this way is that it provided a large data base of responses from which to analyse and interpret the response patterns.

In order to apply the thematic codes in the thematic index, the researcher used the N-Vivo software for qualitative analysis (QSR, 1999). This software was used to catalogue the data into the specific thematic codes as described in the next section.

5.6.3. Applying the "Framework" approach using computer software

Many critics of qualitative research methods argue that often the amount of data collected is so large that it is difficult to manage and process it, resulting in the loss of the specific advantage (information richness) that makes this approach superior to quantitative methods (Hong, 1984; Wolfe *et al.*, 1993). This difficulty, particularly when it is coupled with time and resource constraints, might lead to researchers ignoring part of the data altogether as a way to deal with the problem (Moore *et al.*, 1995). Some commentators have argued that computer-assisted qualitative data analysis systems can help to overcome the problems of managing large amounts of data. Their use has been recommended in qualitative research in the social sciences and tourism as a way to improve the quality and reliability of the analysis (Anderson and Shaw, 1999; Hall and Winchester, 1997; Hong, 1984). Hall and Winchester (1997:192) argue that computer-aided processing *"can improve the rigour, depth and reliability of analysis of qualitative data"*, while reducing the analytical difficulties, and the cost and time expenses typically associated with this type of data.

In a systematic comparison of qualitative data analysis between traditional qualitative analytic techniques and computer-assisted analysis, Anderson and Shaw (1999) find that both manual coding and keyword searches are able to produce similar results to those obtained through the use of Nud.dist analytic software and that they are not mutually exclusive. However, they also find that computer-assisted analysis results in decreasing cost and time expenses and increased analytic power and simplification for the user. They go on to suggest that tourism management will greatly benefit from the increased use of these packages, as they increase the depth of analysis and understanding while reducing the time and effort required to do so (Anderson and Shaw, 1999:105).

One of the more recent software packages aimed at qualitative data analysis is N-Vivo (QSR, 1999), and its earlier precursor, Nud.ist. According to Fielding (1994; cited in Anderson and Shaw, 1999:100), theory building software such as N-Vivo is at the forefront of qualitative computer analysis. By focusing on relationships between categories, it enables researchers to make

connections between different thematic issues, thus allowing for the development of new classifications and categories in the data set. This allows the researcher to formulate and test propositions around a conceptual structure that fits the data. Miles and Weitzman (1994) tested 22 qualitative data analysis packages and found that Nud.ist was one of the more advanced software packages available, as it includes a malleable node-tree structure that can be manipulated easily by the researcher, while assisting in the management and analysis of data and the building of theory.

This study used the N-vivo software to assist in the process of data handling, and it also coupled its application to an analytic index that provided guidance to the analytical process. Its use in conjunction with the "Framework" approach enabled the researcher to substitute all the manual tasks of the approach's three intermediate steps (identification of a thematic framework, coding of issues and concepts, and data mapping and interpretation) with an equivalent but much faster, and more powerful and efficient computer-assisted counterpart.

Among the advantages of using N-Vivo in this study was the ease with which the indexing, search and conceptualisation of unstructured qualitative data was implemented. It also allowed the researcher to retrieve vast quantities of data quickly and efficiently, whilst providing a consistent method for its management. The structure provided by the thematic index and its use within N-Vivo enabled the researcher to build a link between the respondents' original accounts and the categories of responses required to assess the STA framework. This was achieved by connecting respondent views to the STA conceptual framework in an organised, systematic and context-based fashion. This in turn permitted the researcher to establish relationships between response categories, thus making it possible to formulate further theoretical propositions and to generate conclusions around the STA framework.

In the final stage of the data analysis the complete data set was sorted and classified according to the 12 subject areas and 65 research issues set out in the coding index, with these research issues corresponding to one or more of

the data inputs required by the STA framework. Also at this stage a broader picture of the whole data set was built up by identifying key characteristics from the analysis. As set out in the final step of the "Framework" approach, the researcher interpreted the findings by seeking patterns and connections between the perceptions of the respondents and the study's conceptual framework. This process provided an opportunity to explain and interpret the findings. It also allowed for the wider implications of the study findings and the conceptual framework to be recognised. The presentation of the study findings was made through the use of a narrative approach (Jamal and Getz, 2000), where respondents' quotes taken from the interviews are used in support of the assertions made by the researcher. This narrative approach and its *"rich, multi-vocal, dynamic and sometimes contradictory meanings and voices"* offers the reader an opportunity to engage with the data and narrations of the respondents. It seeks to embody their voices and to remind the reader about *"the human and ethical dimension of planning, the concerns and issues of those who are impacted by such processes"* (Jamal and Getz, 2000: 161).

5.7 Methodological limitations of this study

Although this study followed well-establish procedures of qualitative inquiry, it is acknowledged that there might still be threats to the validity and adequacy of the data and its interpretation. Any research dealing with issues of opinion and preference is subject to certain limitations and problems. Some of the limitations that might have affected this research are reviewed here.

One threat to the validity of the findings is the potential imposition of the researcher's own interpretation of meanings within the study's results, so than the perspectives and meanings that respondents attached to their words and actions are lost (Maxwell, 1996). Processes and attitudes may thus be explained in ways that are not compatible with, or which contradict the views of the participants. Similar problems can arise if the researcher did not consider alternative explanations of the phenomena being studied, or did not acknowledge aspects of the data set that contradicted other explanations (Maxwell, 1996: 90).

Another potential problem is that some interviewees may have misrepresented situations and positions that they perceived to be inappropriately judgmental. Or they may have sought new justifications for their actions after the event or have hidden any failures on their part. Also, some of the responses might have been incomplete or might not have fully described the events, attitudes or positions that resulted in a particular situation or phenomena (Burns, 2000; Marshall and Rossman, 1999). In this case where there are conflicting interests, and particularly with Venezuelan government officials, it is possible that some answers would have been politically motivated and that pressures from third parties might have changed their response to certain issues or events.

The researcher attempted to reduce the influence presented by these threats through the use of cross checks between different data sources and between the accounts of different respondents, as well as through the use of triangulation and a longitudinal sampling process. These actions presented the researcher with an opportunity to validate and increase the reliability of the observations and conclusions (Burns, 2000, Decrop, 1999; Maxwell, 1996).

Another potential problem arising from the case study was the low accountability of public officials and elected representatives, which is a chronic problem in Venezuela, and more generally in less developed countries. This research assumed that the representatives of stakeholder groups were giving a fair and undistorted account of the interests and preferences of their constituencies, and thus were representing the views of their interest groups. However, the value and applicability of the information provided by these stakeholders might be reduced if the views only represented their own personal agendas rather than the views of their interest group. This particular problem was tackled by interviewing additional members of stakeholder groups when the researcher felt that the views expressed by a representative were significantly atypical or unrepresentative of others in their stakeholder group.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the methodology used in the research. It briefly reviewed the adequacy of qualitative methods of inquiry as a means of understanding people's perceptions and views in relation to tourism management. It also discussed the research strategy adopted by this study, and how the conceptual frameworks have been closely integrated with the methodology. The chapter then reviewed how the application of a case study methodology has provided a means to evaluate the STA conceptual framework. It has explained how in-depth interviews have been used as the main tool for data collection, along with a decision pathways questionnaire and secondary information. The sampling framework used in this research was also outlined, and explanations were given as to why purposive and snowball sampling methods were appropriate for the case study and the aims of the research.

Finally, this chapter reviewed the approach taken to the analysis of results. It explain how the "Framework" analytical approach was used and how it was linked to a coding index and to computer-based analysis. This was followed by a discussion of the advantages and implications of using a computer-based approach to data analysis. Lastly, the possible limitations of the adopted methodology were considered.

Table 5.4. Thematic index applied in the analysis of the data collected in this study using the "Framework" analytical approach.

A PRIORI ISSUES INDEX

1) Stakeholder Identification

1.1 Perceived missions or roles.
1.2 Perceived duties.
1.3 Patterns of resource use.
1.4 Levels of resource use (direct or indirect).
1.5 Legal relationships around the resources and/or their management.
1.6 Benefits obtained from the resources.
1.7 Perception of resource dependencies, linkages or other relationships.
1.8 Perception of rights or interests in relation to the resources and/or their management.
1.9 Evidence of attempted / past / current involvement with resource management.

2) Stakeholder relationships

2.1 Perceived dependence of others on the services or other functions provided by the stakeholder.
2.2 Perceived stakeholder dependence on the services or other functions provided by others.
2.3 Past or present collaboration or other co-operative relationships with others, including problem-solving alliances and information exchanges.
2.4 Legal or operational constraints received from, or given to others.

3) Resource identification

3.1 Attributes or resources considered valuable or important *per se.*
3.2 Attributes or resources considered valuable or important for tourism.
3.3 Resource being used by tourism.

4) Effects of tourism-related resource use

4.1 Resources being affected by tourism.
4.2 Tourism activities considered appropriate.
4.3 Reasons for considering a tourism activity to be appropriate.
4.4 Tourism activities considered inappropriate.
4.5 Reasons for considering a tourism activity to be inappropriate.
4.6 Levels of resource use.
4.7 Reasons for considering a level of resource use to be appropriate.
4.8 Reasons for considering a level of resource use to be inappropriate.
4.9 Perceived problems of tourism management.
4.10 Perceived problems between tourism and other activities.

5) Stakeholder resource needs

5.1 Perceived advantages and benefits derived of current resource management.
5.2 Perceived disadvantages and costs derived of current resource management.
5.3 Patterns of access to resources, including location and timing.
5.4 Ability to access alternative resources.
5.5 Ability to accommodate changes in resource access and use.

6) Stakeholder expectations related to resource management

6.1 Perceived resource management problems.
6.2 Agreement with current management practices and reasons for agreement.
6.3 Disagreement with current management practices and reasons for disagreement.
6.4 Ability to achieve own objectives with the current management practices, and reasons why the current practices allow or impede that.
6.5 Preferred management situation.

7) Stakeholder attributes

7.L) Stakeholder legitimacy

- 7L.1 Evidence of resource use.
- 7L.2 History or tradition of resource use.
- 7L.3 Evidence of acceptance of stakeholder use or behaviour within current managerial, legal or cultural practices.
- 7L.4 Evidence of legal right to the resources.
- 7L.5 Evidence of resource benefits.
- 7L.6 Evidence of expressed interest or involvement with the resources

7.U) Stakeholder urgency

- 7U.1 Inability to accommodate changes in resource access and use.
- 7U.2 Inability to access alternative resources.
- 7U.3 Evidence of seasonal resource dependence.
- 7U.4 Evidence of dependence on resources with limited availability.
- 7U.5 Perceived negative effects over mission or functions due to change in current practices, or lack of change in current practices.

7.P) Stakeholder power

- 7P.1 Legal control over resources.
- 7P.2 Direct or indirect ability to regulate other's access to resources.
- 7P.3 Claimed or attributed ability to affect others due to absence or behaviour.
- 7P.4 Previous or current involvement in resource management.
- 7P.5 Claimed or attributed evidence of ability to sabotage or ignore management measures.
- 7P.6 Ability to rally other stakeholders to support own claims.
- 7P.7 Claimed or attributed ability to influence management for self-benefit.
- 7P.8 Expressed or implicit perceptions of power from others.

EMERGENT ISSUES INDEX

8) Institutional inefficiency

- 8.1 Complaints or criticisms of government institutions.
- 8.2 Evidence of past or ongoing failures of problem-solving.

9) Public utilities

Mentioned as a problem or limitation for the adequacy of tourism services.

ANALYTICAL THEMES INDEX

10) Perception about Roquenos

- 10.1 Roquenos mentioned in reference to management issues.
- 10.2 Roquenos mentioned in reference to management problems or in answers with negative connotations.
- 10.3 References or suggestions relating to Roquenos when mentioning need for changes in education, training or organisation.

11) Public utilities

Mentioned as a limitation to tourism growth or in association with references to tourism growth / tourism limits / tourism capacity.

12) Institutional conflicts

- 12.1 Tensions or conflicts acknowledged by institutional stakeholders.
- 12.2 Evidence of past or ongoing tensions or conflicts among institutional stakeholders.